



BURNET'S
THEORY
OF THE
EARTH
VOL. II.

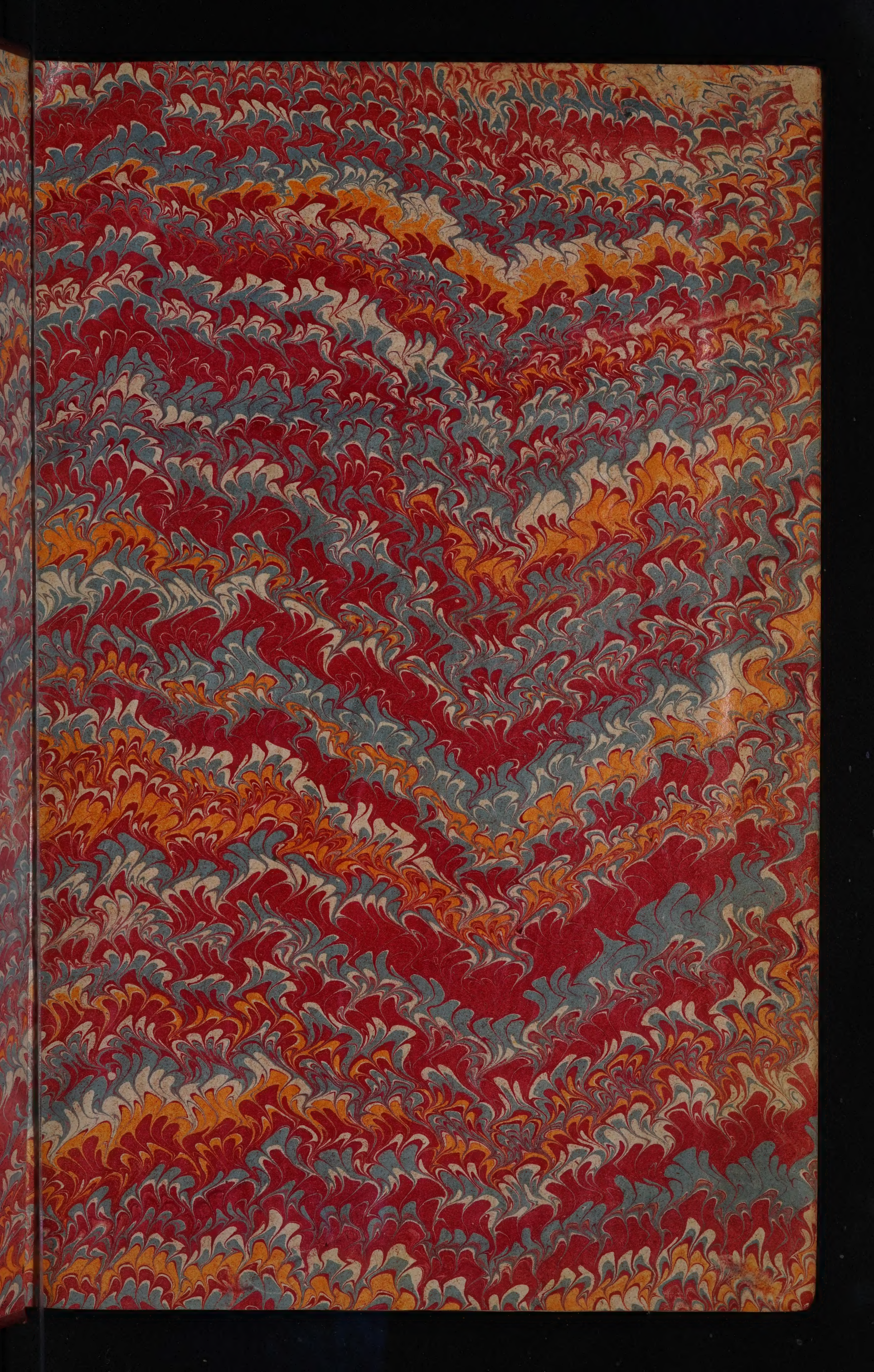








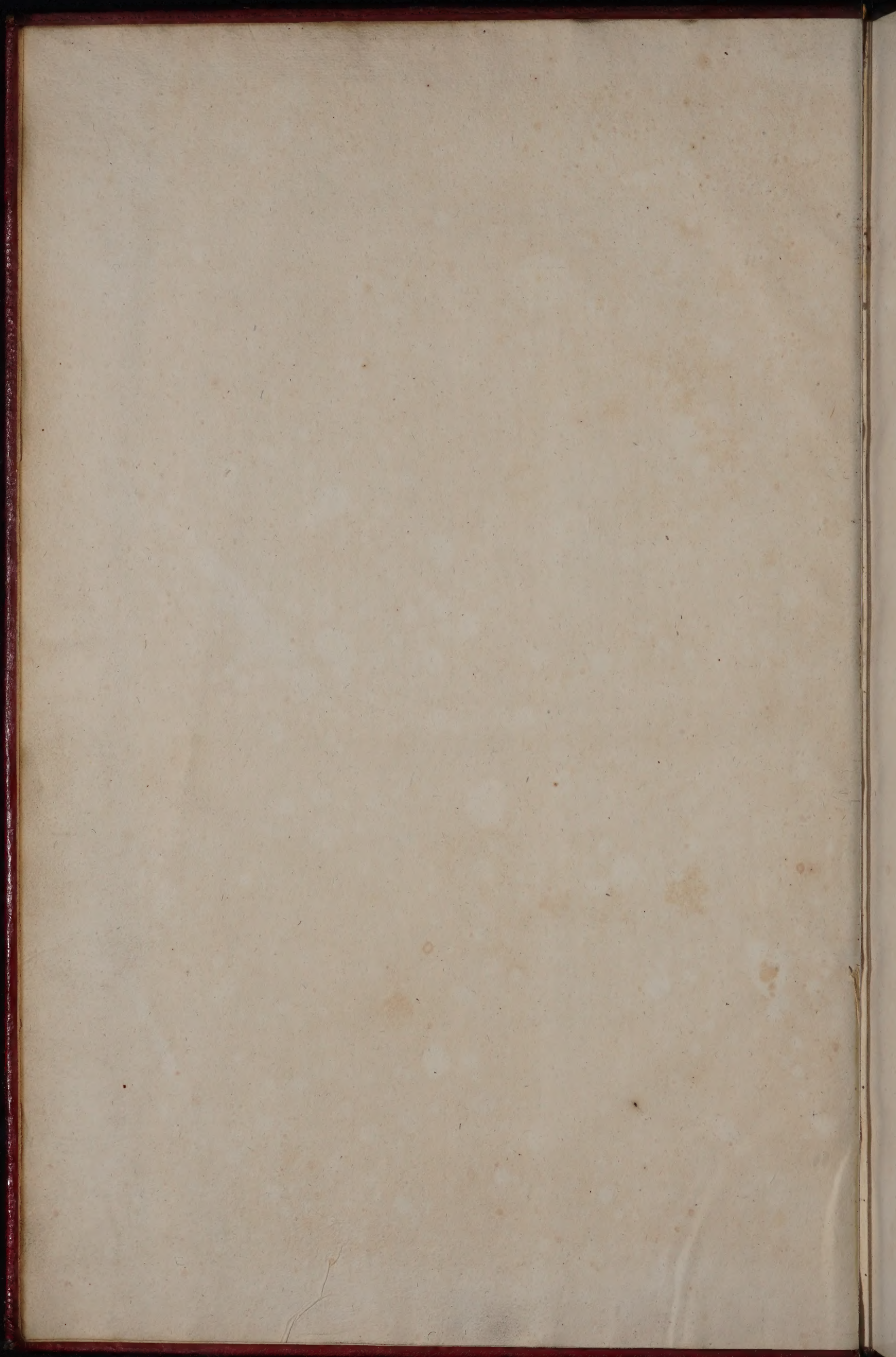
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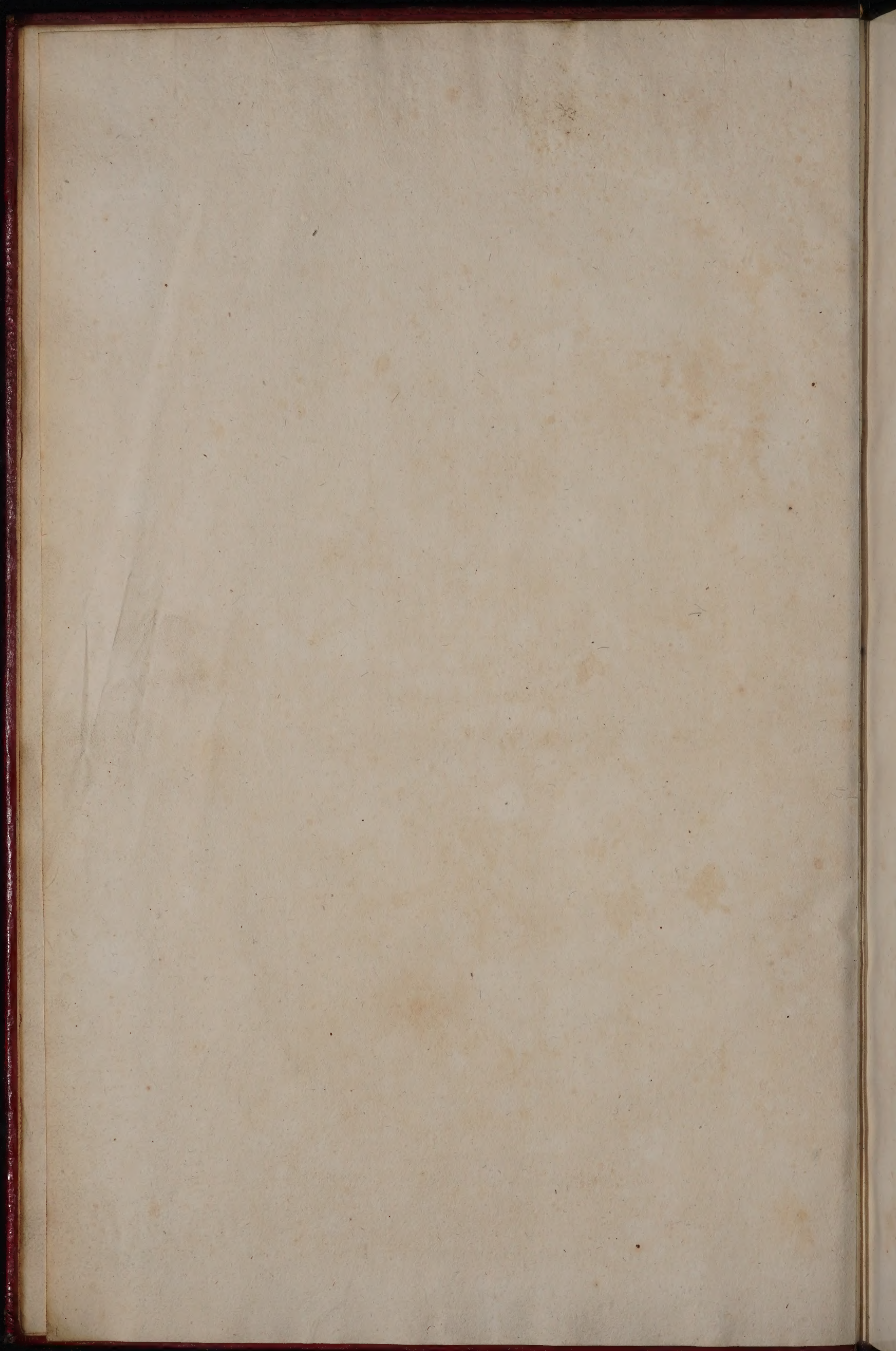


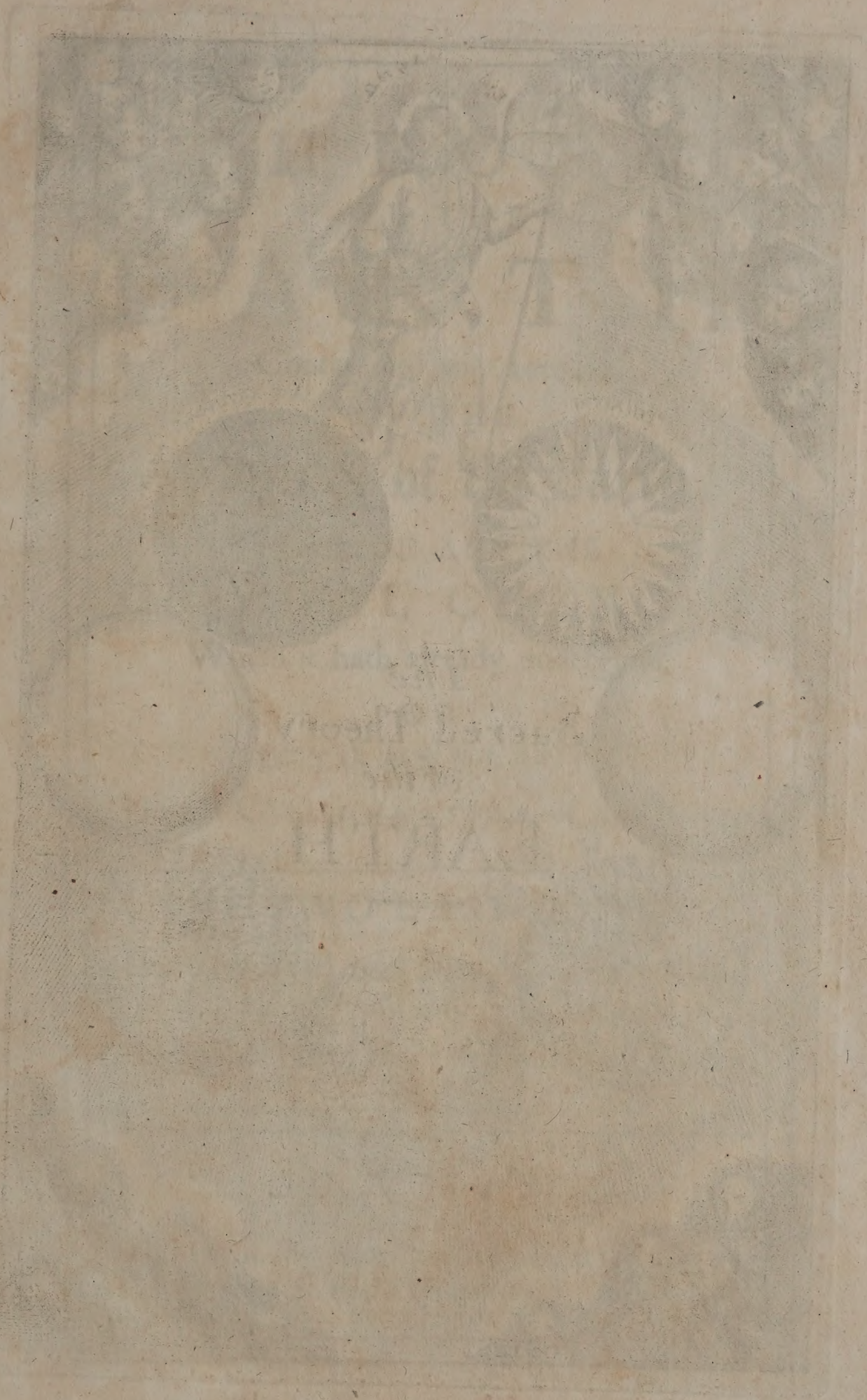
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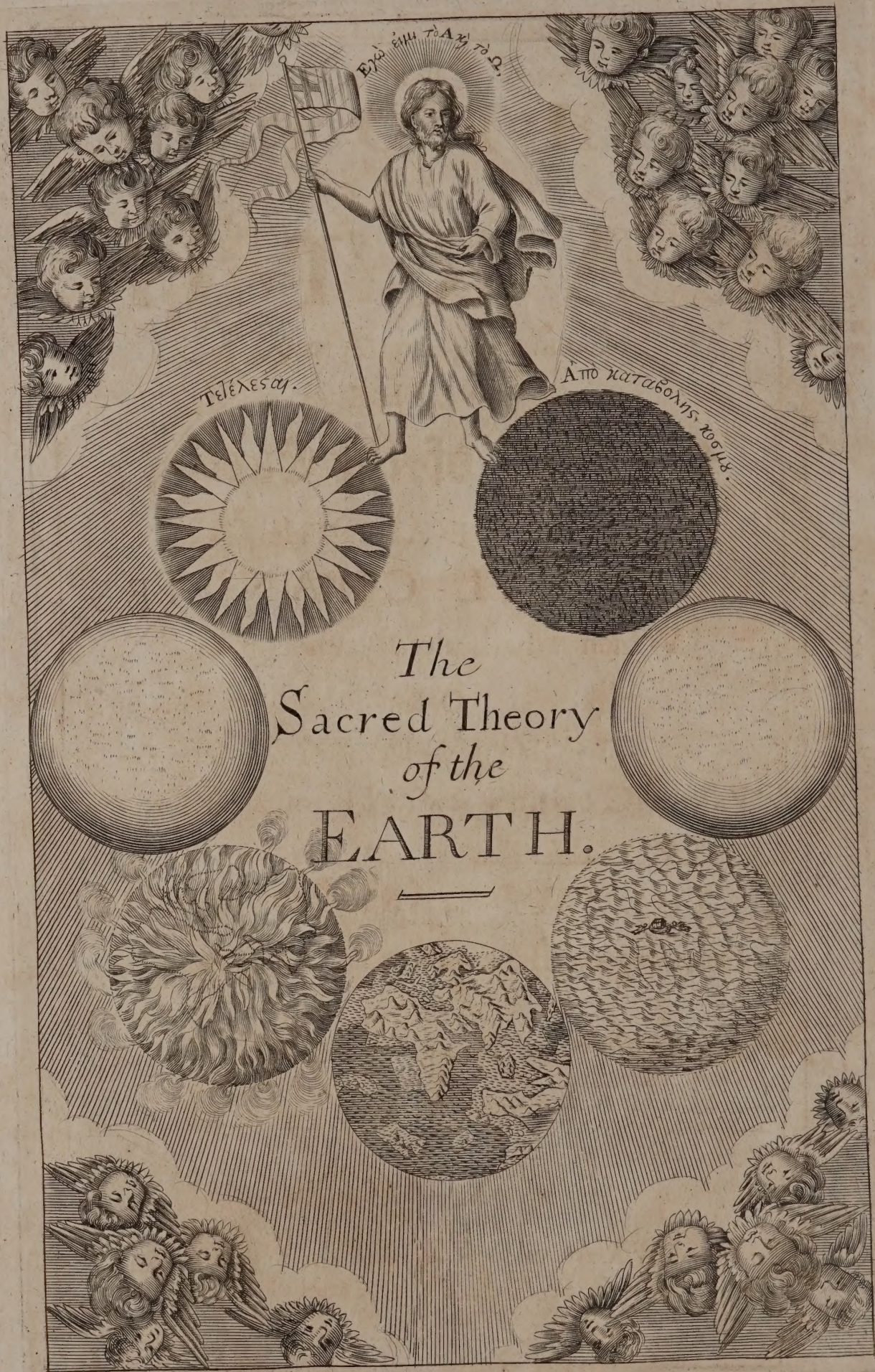
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THE
THEORY
OF THE
EARTH:

Containing an Account
OF THE
Original of the Earth,
AND OF ALL THE
GENERAL CHANGES
Which it hath already undergone,
OR
IS TO UNDERGO,
Till the CONSUMMATION of all Things.

THE TWO LAST BOOKS,
Concerning the BURNING of the WORLD,
AND
Concerning the NEW HEAVENS and NEW EARTH.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *R. Norton*, for *Walter Kettilby*, at the Bishop's
Head in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*. 1690.

THE
TWO
OF THE
R A R T H

Containing an Account
of the
Original of the Earth
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THE TWO BOOKS
Concerning the Burning of the World
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Concerning the New Heavens and New Earth

L O N D O N

Printed by R. Norton for Walter Knapton, at the Bishop's
Head in St Pauls Church-Yard 1693



TO THE
QUEEN'S
MOST
Excellent Majesty.

MADAM,

AVING had the honour to present the first part of this Theory to Your ROYAL UNCLE, I presume to offer the Second to Your Majesty. This part of the Subject, I hope, will be no less acceptable, for certainly 'tis of no less importance. They both indeed agree in this, That there is a WORLD made and destroy'd in either Treatise. But we are more concern'd in what is to come, than in what is past. And as the former Books represented to us the Rise and Fall of the First World; so These give an account of the present Frame of Nature labouring under the last Flames, and of the Resurrection of it in the New Heavens and New Earth: which, according to the Divine Promises, we are to expect.

Cities that are burnt, are commonly rebuilt more beautiful and regular than they were before. And when this World is demolish'd by the last Fire, He that undertakes to rear it up again,
will

The Epistle Dedicatory.

will supply the defects, if there were any, of the former Fabrick. This Theory supposes the present Earth to be little better than an Heap of Ruines: where yet there is room enough for Sea and Land, for Islands and Continents, for several Countries and Dominions: But when these are all melted down, and refin'd in the general Fire, they will be cast into a better mould, and the Form and Qualities of the Earth will become Paradisiacal.

But, I fear, it may be thought no very proper address, to shew Your Majesty a World laid in ashes, where You have so great an interest Your Self, and such fair Dominions; and then, to recompence the loss by giving a Reversion in a Future Earth. But if that future Earth be a second Paradise, to be enjoyed for a Thousand Years; with Peace, Innocency, and constant health: An Inheritance there will be an happy exchange for the best Crown in this World.

I confess, I could never perswade my self, that the Kingdom of Christ and of his Saints, which the Scripture speaks of so frequently, was design'd to be upon this present Earth. But however, upon all suppositions, They that have done some eminent Good in this Life, will be sharers in the happiness of that State. To humble the Oppressors, and rescue the Oppressed, is a work of Generosity and Charity that cannot want its reward; Yet, MADAM, They are the greatest Benefactors to Mankind, that dispose the World to become Vertuous: and by their example, Influence, and Authority, retrieve that TRUTH and JUSTICE, that have been lost, amongst men, for many Ages. The School-
Divines

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Divines tell us, Those that act or suffer great things for the Publick Good, are distinguish'd in Heaven by a Circle of Gold about their Heads. One would not willingly vouch for that: but one may safely for what the Prophet says, which is far greater: namely, that They shall shine like Stars in the Firmament, that turn many to Righteousness. Which is not to be understood, so much, of the Conversion of single Souls, as of the turning of Nations and People, The turning of the World to Righteousness. They that lead on that great and happy Work, shall be distinguish'd in Glory from the rest of Mankind.

We are sensible, M A D A M, from Your Great Example, that Piety and Vertue seated upon a Throne, draw many to imitation, whom ill Principles, or the course of the World, might have led another way. These are the best, as well as easiest Victories, that are gain'd without Contest. And as Princes are the Vicegerents of God upon Earth, so when their Majesty is in Conjunction with Goodness, it hath a double Character of Divinity upon it: and we owe them a double Tribute, of Fear and Love. Which, with constant Prayers for Your M A J E S T Y ' S present and future Happiness, shall be always Dutifully paid, by

Y O U R M A J E S T Y ' S

Most Humble and most

Obedient Subject,

T. BURNET.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Prayers tell us, Those that are to suffer great things for the Publick Good, are distinguished in Heaven by a Curlew Gold about their Heads. One would not willingly reach for that: but one may (say) for what the Prophet says, which is far greater: namely, that I say shall shine like Stars in the Firmament, that turn many to Righteousness. Which is not to be understood, so much of the Conversion of single Souls, as of the turning of Nations and People. For the turning of the World to Righteousness. They that are on the great and happy Work, shall be distinguished in Glory from the rest of Mankind.

We are sensible, M^{ty} that from your Great Example, that P^{ty} and W^{ty} are led upon a Pious, heavenly to imitation, and will be ruled, or the course of their world, much as we are ruled. For we are the best, as well as the worst. We are guided without constraint, and as Princes, and the Sovereigns of God upon Earth, so when they are in conjunction with God, we have a double Character of Divinity upon us: and we are then a double Prince, of Fear and Love. We shall with constant Prayer for your M^{ty} and your Son and your Happiness, shall be always your humble Servants.

Your Most Affectionate Son

John Milton

Obsequious Subject

P. BURNET

P R E F A C E
T O T H E
R E A D E R



HAVE not much to say to the Reader in this Preface to the Third Part of the Theory: seeing it treats upon a Subject own'd by all, and out of dispute: *The Conflagration of the World.* The question will be only about the bounds and limits of the Conflagration, the Causes and the Manner of it. These I have fix'd according to the truest measures I could take from Scripture, and from Nature. I differ, I believe, from the common Sentiment in this, that, in following *S. Peter's* Philosophy, I suppose, that the burning of the Earth will be a true Liquefaction or dissolution of it, as to the exterior Region. And that this lays a foundation for *New Heavens* and a *New Earth*; which seems to me as plain a doctrine in Christian Religion, as the Conflagration it self.

I have endeavour'd to propose an intelligible way, whereby the Earth may be consum'd by Fire. But if any one can propose another, more probable and more consistent, I will be the first man that shall give him thanks for his discovery. He that loves Truth for its own sake, is willing to receive it from any hand: as he that truly loves his Country, is glad of a Victory over the Enemy, whether himself, or any other, has the glory of it. I need not repeat here, what I have already said upon several occasions, That 'tis the substance of this Theory, whether in this part or in other parts, that I mainly regard and depend upon. Being willing to suppose that many single

P R E F A C E, &c.

explications and particularities may be rectified, upon further thoughts and clearer light. I know our best writings, in this life, are but *Essays*, which we leave to Posterity to review and correct.

As to the Style, I always endeavour to express my self, in a plain and perspicuous manner: that the Reader may not lose time, nor wait too long, to know my meaning. To give an Attendant quick dispatch, is a civility, whether you do his business or no. I would not willingly give any one the trouble of reading a period twice over, to know the sence of it: lest when he comes to know it, he should not think it a recompence for his pains. Whereas, on the contrary, if you are easie to your Reader, he will certainly make you an allowance for it, in his censure.

You must not think it strange however, that the Author sometimes, in meditating upon this subject, is warm in his thoughts and expressions. For to see a World perishing in Flames, Rocks melting, the Earth trembling, and an Host of Angels in the clouds, one must be very much a Stoick, to be a cold and unconcerned Spectator of all this. And when we are mov'd our selves, our words will have a tincture of those passions which we feel. Besides, in moral reflections which are designed for use, there must be some heat, as well as dry reason, to inspire this cold clod of clay, this dull body of earth, which we carry about with us; and you must soften and pierce that crust, before you can come at the Soul. But especially when things future are to be represented, you cannot use too strong Colours, if you would give them life, and make them appear present to the mind. Farewel.

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BOOK III.

Concerning the Conflagration.

CHAP. I.

THE INTRODUCTION;

With the Contents and Order of this Work.



SEING Providence hath planted in all Men a natural desire and curiosity of knowing things to come; and such things especially as concern our particular Happiness, or the general Fate of mankind: This Treatise may, in both respects, hope for a favourable reception amongst inquisitive persons; seeing the design of it is, to give an account of the greatest revolutions of Nature that are expected in future Ages: and in the first place, of the *Conflagration of the World*. In which Universal Calamity, when all Nature suffers, every man's particular concern must needs be involv'd.

We see with what eagerness men pry into the Stars, to see if they can read there the Death of a King, or the fall of an Empire: 'Tis not the fate of any single Prince or Potentate, that we Calculate, but of all Mankind:

B

Nor

Nor of this or that particular Kingdom or Empire, but of the whole Earth. Our enquiries must reach to that great period of Nature, when all things are to be dissolv'd: both humane affairs, and the Stage whereon they are acted. When the Heavens and the Earth will pass away; and the Elements melt with fervent heat. We desire, if possible, to know what will be the face of that Day, that great and terrible Day, when the Regions of the Air will be nothing but mingled Flame and Smoak, and the habitable Earth turn'd into a Sea of molten Fire.

But we must not leave the World in this disorder and confusion, without examining what will be the Issue and Consequences of it. Whether this will be the End of all things, and Nature, by a sad fate, lie eternally dissolv'd and desolate in this manner: or whether we may hope for a Restauration: *New Heavens* and a *New Earth*, which the Holy Writings make mention of, more pure and perfect than the former. As if this was but as a *Refiner's fire*, to purge out the dross and courser parts, and then cast the Mass again into a new and better Mould. These things, with God's assistance, shall be matter of our present enquiry; These make the general subject of this Treatise, and of the remaining parts of this *Theory of the Earth*. Which now, you see, begins to be a kind of Prophecy, or Prognostication of things to come: as it hath been hitherto an History of things pass'd; of such states and changes as Nature hath already undergone. And if that account which we have given of the Origine of the Earth, its first and Paradisiacal form, and the dissolution of it at the universal Deluge, appear fair and reasonable: The Second dissolution by Fire, and the renovation of it out of a second Chaos, I hope will be deduc'd from as clear grounds and suppositions. And Scripture it self will be a more visible Guide to us in these following parts of the Theory, than it was in the former. In the meantime, I take occasion to declare here again, as I have done heretofore, that neither this, nor any other great revolutions of Nature, are brought to pass, by causes purely natural, without the conduct of a particular

Chap. I. *Concerning the Conflagration.*

particular Providence. And 'tis the Sacred Books of Scripture that are the records of this Providence, both as to times past, and times to come: as to all the signal Changes either of the Natural World, or of Mankind, and the different Oeconomies of Religion. In which respects, these Books, tho' they did not contain a Moral Law, would notwithstanding be, as the most mystical, so also the most valuable Books in the World.

This Treatise, you see, will consist of Two Parts: The former whereof is to give an account of the *Conflagration*; and the latter, of the *New Heavens* and *New Earth* following upon it; together with the state of Mankind in those new Habitations. As to the Conflagration, we first enquire, what the Antients thought concerning the present frame of this World; whether it was to perish or no: whether to be destroyed, or to stand eternally in this posture. Then in what manner they thought it would be destroy'd; by what force or violence; whether by Fire or other ways. And with these opinions of the Antients we will compare the doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles, to discover and confirm the truth of them. In the Second place, We will examine what Calculations or Conjectures have been made concerning the time of this great Catastophe, or of the end of this World. Whether that period be defineable or no: and whether by natural Arguments, or by Prophecies. Thirdly, We will consider the Signs of the approaching Conflagration: Whether such as will be in Nature, or in the State of humane Affairs; but especially such as are taken notice of and recorded in Scripture. Fourthly, which is the principal point, and yet that wherein the Antients have been most silent, *What Causes* there are in Nature, what preparations, for this Conflagration: Where are the Seeds of this universal Fire, or fewel sufficient for the nourishing of it? Lastly, in what order and by what degrees the Conflagration will proceed: In what manner the frame of the Earth will be dissolv'd: and what will be the dreadful countenance of a *Burning World*.

These heads are set down more fully in the Arguments of each Chapter; and seem to be sufficient for the explication of this whole matter: Taking in some additional discourses, which, in pursuing these heads, enter of their own accord, and make the work more even and intire. In the second Part, we restore the World that we had destroy'd: Build new Heavens and a new Earth, *wherein Righteousness shall dwell*. Establish that new order of things, which is so often celebrated by the Prophets: A Kingdom of Peace and of Justice, where the Enemy of Mankind shall be bound, and the Prince of Peace shall rule. A Paradise without a Serpent, and a Tree of Knowledge, not to wound, but to heal the Nations. Where will be neither *curse*, nor *pain*, nor *death*, nor *disease*. Where all things are new, all things are more perfect: both the World it self, and its Inhabitants. Where the First-born from the Dead, have the First-fruits of glory.

We dote upon this present World, and the enjoyments of it: and 'tis not without pain, and fear, and reluctancy, that we are torn from them: as if our hopes lay all within the compass of this life. Yet, I know not by what good fate, my thoughts have been always fixt upon things to come, more than upon things present. These I know, by certain experience, to be but trifles; and if there be nothing more considerable to come, the whole Being of Man is no better than a trifle. But there is room enough before us in that we call *Eternity*, for great and noble Scenes: and the mind of Man feels it self lessen'd and straiten'd in this low and narrow state: wishes and waits to see something greater. And if it could discern another World a coming, on this side eternal life; a beginning Glory, the best that Earth can bear, It wou'd be a kind of Immortality to enjoy that prospect before-hand; To see, when this Theater is dissolv'd, where we shall act next, and what parts. What Saints and Hero's, if I may so say, will appear upon that Stage; and with what luster and excellency. How easie would it be, under a view of these futurities, to despise the little pomps and honours, and the momentany pleasures of a mortal life. But I proceed to our Subject.

CHAP.

C H A P. II.

The true state of the Question is propos'd.

'Tis the general doctrine of the Ancients, that the present World, or the present frame of Nature, is mutable and perishable: To which the Sacred Books agree: and natural reason can alledge nothing against it.

W H E N we speak of the End or destruction of the World, whether by Fire or otherwise, 'Tis not to be imagin'd that we understand this of the *Great Universe*; Sun, Moon, and Stars, and the highest Heavens: as if these were to perish or be destroy'd, some few years hence, whether by Fire or any other way. This Question is only to be understood of the *Sublunary World*, of this Earth and its Furniture; which had its original about six thousand years ago, according to the History of *Moses*; and hath once already been destroy'd, when the exterior region of it broke, and the Abyss issuing forth, as out of a womb, overflow'd all the habitable Earth. The next Deluge is that of Fire; which will have the same bounds, and overflow the Surface of the Earth much-what in the same manner. But the celestial Regions, where the Stars and Angels inhabit, are not concern'd in this fate: Those are not made of combustible matter, nor, if they were, cou'd our flames reach them. Possibly those Bodies may have changes and revolutions peculiar to themselves, but in ways unknown to us, and after long and unknown periods of time. Therefore when we speak of the Conflagration of the World, These have no concern in the question; nor any other part of the Universe, than the Earth and its dependances. As will evidently appear when we come to explain the manner and causes of the Conflagration.

And

And as this Conflagration can extend no further than to the Earth and its Elements, so neither can it destroy the matter of the Earth; but onely the form and fashion of it, as it is an habitable World. Neither Fire, nor any other natural Agent can destroy Matter, that is, reduce it to nothing: It may alter the modes and qualities of it, but the substance will always remain. And accordingly the Apostle, when he speaks of the mutability of this World, says onely,
1 Cor. 7. 31. *The figure or fashion of this World passes away.* This structure of the Earth and disposition of the Elements:
2 Epist. 3. And all the *works* of the Earth, as St. Peter says; All its natural productions, and all the works of art or humane industry; these will perish, melted or torn in pieces by the Fire; but without an annihilation of the Matter, any more than in the former Deluge. And this will be further prov'd and illustrated in the beginning of the following Book.

The question being thus stated, we are next to consider the sense of Antiquity upon these two Points: First, whether this Sublunary World is mutable and perishable. Secondly, by the force and action of what causes, and in what manner it will perish: whether by Fire or otherwise. *Aristotle* is very irregular in his Sentiments about the state of the World; He allows it neither beginning nor ending, rise nor fall, but wou'd have it eternal and immutable. And this he understands not onely of the great Universe, but of this Sublunary World, this Earth which we inhabit: wherein he will not admit there ever have been or ever will be, either general Deluges or Conflagrations. And as if he was ambitious to be thought singular in his opinion about the eternity of the World, He says, *All the Ancients* before him, gave some beginning or origine to the World: but were not indeed so unanimous as to its future fate: Some believing it immutable, or as the Philosophers call it, incorruptible; Others, that it had its fatal times and periods, as lesser Bodies have; and a term of age prefixt to it, by Providence.

But before we examine this Point any further, it will be necessary to reflect upon that which we noted before,

fore, an ambiguity in the use of the word *World*, which gives frequent occasion of mistakes in reading the Ancients: when that which they speak of the *great Universe*, we apply to the *Sublunary World*: or on the contrary, what they speak of this Earth, we extend to the whole Universe. And if some of them, besides *Aristotle*, made the World incorruptible, they might mean that of the *great Universe*, which they thought would never be dissolv'd or perish as to its Mass and bulk: But single parts and points of it (and our Earth is no more) may be variously transform'd, and made habitable and uninhabitable, according to certain periods of time, without any prejudice to their Philosophy. So *Plato*, for instance, thinks this World will have no Dissolution: for, being a work so beautiful and noble; the goodness of God, he says, will always preserve it. It is most reasonable to understand this of the Great Universe; for, in our Earth, *Plato* himself admits such dissolutions, as are made by general Deluges and Conflagrations; and we contend for no other. So likewise in other Authors, if they speak of the immortality of the World, you must observe what world they apply it to; and whether to the matter or the form of it: and if you remember that our Discourse proceeds onely upon the Sublunary World, and the dissolution of its form, you will find little in antiquity contrary to this doctrine. I always except *Aristotle*, (who allow'd of no Providence in this inferiour World) and some *Pythagoreans* falsely so call'd, that were Apostates from the doctrine of their Master. These being excepted, upon a view of the rest, you will find very few dissenters from this general doctrine.

Plato's argument against the dissolution of the world, from the goodness and wisdom of God, wou'd not be altogether unreasonable, tho' apply'd to this Earth, if it was so to be dissolv'd, as never to be restor'd again. But we expect *new Heavens* and a *new Earth* upon the dissolution of these: better in all respects, more commodious and more beautiful. And the several perfections of the divine nature, wisdom, power, goodness, justice, sanctity, cannot be so well display'd and exemplifi'd in any one single state of Nature, as
in

in a succession of States: fitted to receive one another according to the dispositions of the Moral World, and the order of Divine Providence. Wherefore *Plato's* argument from the Divine Attributes, all things consider'd, doth rather prove a succession of Worlds, than that one single world should remain the same throughout all ages, without change or variation. Next to the *Platonists*, the *Stoicks* were most considerable in matters relating to Morality and Providence: And their opinion, in this case, is well known; they being lookt upon by the Moderns, as the principal authors of the doctrine of the *Conflagration*. Nor is it less known that the School of *Democritus* and *Epicurus* made all their worlds subject to dissolution; and by a new concourse of Atomes restor'd them again. Lastly, The *Ionick* Philosophers, who had *Thales* for their Master, and were the first Naturalists amongst the *Greeks*, taught the same doctrine. We have indeed but an imperfect account left us of this Sect, and 'tis great pity; for as it was one of the most ancient, so it seems to have been one of the most considerable amongst the *Greeks* for Natural Philosophy. In those remains which *Diogenes Laertius* hath preserv'd, of *Anaxagoras*, *Anaximenes*, *Archelaus*, &c. All great men in their time, we find that they treated much of the Origine of the world, and had many extraordinary Notions about it, which come lame and defective to us. The doctrine of their founder, *Thales*, which made all things to consist of Water, seems to have a great resemblance to the doctrine of *Moses* and *S. Peter*, about the constitution of the first Heavens and Earth. But there is little in *Laertius* what their opinion was about the Dissolution of the world. Other Authors inform us more of that. *Stobæus* joyns them with *Leucippus* and the *Epicureans*: *Simplicius* with *Heraclitus* and the *Stoicks*, in this doctrine about the corruptibility of the World. So that all the Schools of the Greek Philosophers, as we noted before, were unanimous in this point, excepting the *Peripateticks*; whose Master, *Aristotle*, had neither modesty enough to follow the doctrine of his Predecessors, nor wit enough to invent any thing better. Besides

Gen. 1.
2 Pet. 2. 5.

Ecl. Phys.
l. 1. c. 24.

Besides these Sects of Philosophers, there were Theologers amongst the Greeks, more antient than these Sects, and more mystical. *Aristotle* often distinguisheth the *Naturalists* and the *Theologues*. Such ^{οἱ φυσικοὶ, οἱ θεολογοί.} were *Orpheus* and his followers, who had more of the antient Oriental Learning than the succeeding Philosophers. But they writ their Philosophy, or Theology rather, Mythologically and Poetically, in Parables and Allegories, that needed an interpretation. All these Theologers supposed the Earth to rise from a Chaos: and as they said that *Love* was the principle at first, that united the loose and severed Elements, and formed them into an habitable World: So they supposed that if *Strife* or *Contention* prevail'd, that would again dissolve and disunite them, and reduce things into a Chaos: Such as the Earth will be in, upon the Conflagration. And it further appears, that both these Orders of the Learned in Greece supposed this present frame of Nature might perish, by their doctrine of *Periodical Revolutions*, or of the Renovation of the World after certain periods of time: which was a doctrine common amongst the learned *Greeks*, and received by them from the ancient Barbarick Nations. As will appear more at large in the following Book. In the mean time we ^{Ch. 3.} may observe that *Origen* in answering *Celsus*, about ^{li. 5.} the point of the Resurrection, tells him, that Doctrine ought not to appear so strange or ridiculous to him, seeing their own Authors did believe and teach the *Renovation of the World*, after certain Ages or periods. And the truth is, this Renovation of the World, rightly stated, is the same thing with the *first Resurrection* of the Christians. And as to the second and general Resurrection, when the Righteous shall have Celestial bodies; 'tis well known that the *Platonists* and *Pythagoreans* cloath'd the Soul with a Celestial body, or, in their Language, an Ethereal Vehicle, as her last Beatitude or Glorification. So that *Origen* might very justly tell his adversary, he had no reason to ridicule the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection, seeing their own Authors had the main strokes of it in their Traditionary Learning.

I will only add one remark more, before we leave this Subject, to prevent a mistake in the word *Immortal* or *Immortality*, when applyed to the World. As I told you before, the equivocation that was in that term *World*, it being us'd sometimes for the whole Universe, sometimes for this inferiour part of it where we live; so likewise we must observe, that when this inferiour World is said to be *immortal*, by the Philosophers, as sometimes it is, that commonly is not meant of any single state of Nature, or any single World, but of a succession of Worlds, consequent one upon another. As a family may be said immortal, not in any single person, but in a succession of Heirs. So as, many times, when the Ancients mention the immortality of the World, they do not thereby exclude the Dissolution or Renovation of it: but suppose a vicissitude, or series of Worlds succeeding one another. This observation is not mine, but was long since made by *Simplicius*, *Stobæus*, and others, who tell us in what sense some of those Philosophers who allowed the World to be perishable, did yet affirm it to be immortal: namely, by successive renovations.

Thus much is sufficient to shew the sense and judgment of Antiquity, as to the changeableness or perpetuity of the World. But ancient learning is like ancient Medals, more esteemed for their rarity, than their real use; unless the Authority of a Prince make them currant. So neither will these testimonies be of any great effect, unless they be made good and valuable by the Authority of Scripture. We must therefore add the Testimonies of the Prophets and Apostles to these of the Greeks and Barbarians, that the evidence may be full and undeniable. That the Heavens and the Earth will perish or be chang'd into another form, is, sometimes, plainly express, sometimes supposed and alluded to in Scripture. The Prophet *David's* testimony is express, both for the beginning and ending of the World: in the 102.

Ver. 25, 26,
27.

Psalm, Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the Earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old

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old like a garment; as a Vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy Years shall have no end. The Prophet Esay's testimony Ca. 51. 6. is no less exprefs, to the same purpose. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the Earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the Earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner. These Texts are plain and explicite; And in allusion to this day of the Lord, and this destruction of the World, the same Prophet often useth phrases that relate to it. As the Concussion of the Isa. 13. 13. Heavens and the Earth. The shaking of the foundations c. 24. 18, 19. of the World. The dissolution of the Host of Heaven. And other Sacred Writers have expressions of the like force, and relating to the same effect. As the Hills melting like wax, at the presence of the Lord: Psal. 97. 5. Shattering once more all the parts of the Creation: Hagg. 2. 6. Overturning the mountains, and making the pillars of the Earth to tremble: Job 9. 5, 6. If you reflect upon the explication given of the Deluge in the first part of this Theory, and attend to the manner of the Conflagration, as it will be explain'd in the sequel of this Discourse, you will see the justness and fitness of these expressions: That they are not poetical hyperboles, or random expressions, of great and terrible things in general, but a true account of what hath been, or will be, at that great day of the Lord. 'Tis true, the Prophets sometimes use such-like expressions figuratively, for commotions in States and Kingdoms, but that is onely by way of metaphor and accommodation; the true basis they stand upon, is that ruine, overthrow, and dissolution of the natural World, which was once at the Deluge, and will be again, after another manner, at the general Conflagration.

As to the new Testament, our Saviour says, *Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but his words shall not pass away*: Matt. 24. 35. St. Paul says, the Scheme of this world; the fashion, form, and composition of it, passeth away: 1 Cor. 7. 31. And when mention is made of new Heavens and a new Earth, which both the Prophet *Isaiah*, and the Apostles, St. Peter and St. John, Isa. 65. 17. & 66. 22. Rev. 21. 1. mention, 'tis plainly imply'd that the old ones will be 2 Pet. 3. 13.

dissolv'd.

dissolv'd. The same thing is also imply'd, when our Saviour speaks of a *Renascency* or *Regeneration*: Matt: 19. 28. and St. Peter, of a *Restitution* of all things: *Act.* 3. 21. For what is now, must be abolish'd, before any former order of things can be restor'd or reduc'd. In a word, If there was nothing in Scripture concerning this subject, but that discourse of St. Peter's, in his 2^d. Epistle and 3^d. Chapter, concerning the triple order and succession of the Heavens and the Earth; past, present, and to come; that alone wou'd be a conviction and demonstration to me, that this present World will be dissolv'd.

You will say, it may be, in the last place, we want still the testimony of natural reason and Philosophy to make the evidence compleat. I answer, 'tis enough if They be silent, and have nothing to say to the contrary. Here are witnesses, humane and divine, and if none appear against them, we have no reason to refuse their testimony, or to distrust it. Philosophy will very readily yield to this doctrine, that All material compositions are dissolvable: and she will not wonder to see that die, which she had seen born; I mean, this Terrestrial World. She stood upon the Chaos, and see it rowl it self, with difficulty and after many struglings, into the form of an habitable Earth: And that form she see broken down again at the Deluge; and can as little hope or expect now, as then, that it should be everlasting and immutable. There would be nothing great or considerable in this inferiour World, if there were not such revolutions of nature. The Seasons of the Year, and the fresh Productions of the Spring, are pretty in their way; But when the *Great Year* comes about, with a new order of all things, in the Heavens and on the Earth; and a new dress of nature throughout all her regions, far more goodly and beautiful than the fairest Spring; This gives a new life to the Creation, and shows the greatness of its Author. Besides, These Fatal Catastrophes are always a punishment to degenerate Mankind, that are overwhelm'd in the ruins of these perishing Worlds. And to make nature her self execute the divine vengeance against rebellious Creatures, argues both the power

*Annus
Magnus.*

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power and wisdom of that Providence that governs all things here below. These things Reason and Philosophy approve of; but if you further require that they should shew a *Necessity* of this future destruction of the World, from *Natural Causes*, with the time and all other circumstances of this effect; your demands are unreasonable, seeing these things do not depend solely upon Nature. But if you will content your self to know what dispositions there are in Nature towards such a change, how it may begin, proceed, and be consummate, under the conduct of Providence, be pleased to read the following Discourse for your further satisfaction.

C H A P. III.

That the World will be destroy'd by Fire, is the doctrine of the Ancients, especially of the Stoicks. That the same doctrine is more ancient than the Greeks, and deriv'd from the Barbarick Philosophy, and That probably from Noah; the Father of all Traditionary Learning. The same doctrine expressly authoriz'd by Revelation, and inroll'd into the Sacred Canon.

THAT the present World, or the present frame of Nature, will be destroy'd, we have already shewn. In what manner this destruction will be, by what force or what kind of fate, must be our next enquiry. The Philosophers have always spoken of *Fire* and *Water*, those two unruly Elements, as the only Causes that can destroy the World, and work our ruine; And accordingly they say, all the great and fatal Revolutions of Nature, either past or to come, depend upon the violence of these Two; when they get the mastery, and overwhelm all the rest and
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the whole Earth, in a Deluge or Conflagration. But as they make these Two the Destroying Elements, so they also make them the Purifying Elements. And accordingly in their Lustrations, or their rites and ceremonies for purging sin, Fire and Water were chiefly made use of, both amongst the *Romans*, *Greeks* and *Barbarians*. And when these Elements over-run the world, it is not, they say, for a final destruction of it, but to purge Mankind and Nature from their Impurities. As for purgation by Fire and Water, the stile of our Sacred Writings does very much accommodate it self to that sence; and the Holy Ghost, who is the great Purifier of Souls, is compared in his operation upon us, and in our regeneration, to fire or water. And as for the external world, S. *Peter* makes the Flood to have been a kind of *Baptising* or renovation of the world. And S. *Paul* and the Prophet *Malachy* make the last Fire, to be a purging and refining fire. But to return to the Ancients.

1 *Ep.* 3. 21.1 *Cor.* 3. 13.*Mal.* 3. 2,3.

The *Stoicks* especially, of all other Sects amongst the *Greeks*, have preserved the doctrine of the Conflagration, and made it a considerable part of their Philosophy, and almost a character of their order. This is a thing so well known that I need not use any Citations to prove it. But they cannot pretend to have been the first authors of it neither. For, besides that amongst the *Greeks* themselves, *Heraclitus* and *Empedocles*, more ancient than *Zeno*, the Master of the *Stoicks*, taught this doctrine, 'tis plainly a branch of the Barbarick Philosophy, and taken from thence by the *Greeks*. For it is well known that the most ancient and mystick learning amongst the *Greeks*, was not originally their own, but borrowed of the more Eastern Nations, by *Orpheus*, *Pythagoras*, *Plato*, and many more: who travel'd thither, and traded with the Priests for knowledge and Philosophy; and when they got a competent stock, returned home, and set up a School, or a Sect, to instruct their Country-men. But before we pass to the Eastern nations, let us, if you please, compare the *Roman* Philosophy upon this subject, with that of the *Greeks*.

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The *Romans* were a great people, that made a shew of Learning, but had little in reality, more than words and Rhetorick. Their curiosity or emulation in Philosophical Studies was so little, that it did not make different Sects and Schools amongst them, as amongst the *Greeks*. I remember no Philosophers they had but such as *Tully*, *Seneca*, and some of their Poets. And of these *Lucretius*, *Lucan* and *Ovid*, have spoken openly of the Conflagration. *Ovid's* Verses are well known,

*Esse quoque in fatis reminiscitur, affore tempus,
Quo mare, quo Tellus, correptaque Regia Cæli
Ardeat, & mundi moles operosa laboret.*

*A Time decreed by Fate, at length will come,
When Heavens and Earth and Seas shall have their doom;
A fiery doom: And Nature's mighty frame
Shall break, and be dissolv'd into a flame.*

We see *Tully's* sence upon this matter in *Scipio's Dream*. When the old man speaks to his Nephew *Africanus*, and shews him from the clouds, this spot of Earth, where we live; He tells him, tho' our actions shou'd be great, and fortune favour them with success, yet there wou'd be no room for any lasting glory in this World; for the World it self is transient and fugitive. And a Deluge or a Conflagration, which necessarily happen after certain periods of time, sweep away all records of humane actions. As for *Seneca*, he being a profest *Stoick*, we need not doubt of his opinion in this point. We may add here, if you please, the *Sibylline verses*, which were kept with great Religion, in the Capitol at *Rome*, and consulted with much ceremony upon solemn occasions. These *Sibyls* were the Prophetesses of the *Gentiles*, and tho' their writings now have many spurious additions, yet none doubt but that the Conflagration of the World was one of their original Prophecies.

Let us now proceed to the Eastern nations. As the *Romans* receiv'd the small skill they had in the Sciences, from the *Greeks*; so the *Greeks* receiv'd their chief mystick

mystick learning from the *Barbarians*: that is, from the *Aegyptians*, *Persians*, *Phœnicians*, and other Eastern Nations: For 'tis not onely the Western or Northern people, that they call'd *Barbarians*, but indeed all Nations besides themselves. For that is commonly the vanity of great Empires, to uncivilize in a manner all the rest of the World; and to account all those People *Barbarous*, that are not subject to their dominion: These however, whom they call'd so, were the most ancient People, and had the first learning that was ever heard of after the Flood. And amongst these, the *Aegyptians* were as famous as any: whose Sentiment in this particular of the Conflagration is well known. For *Plato*, who liv'd amongst them several years, tells us in his *Timæus*, that it was the doctrine of their Priests, that the fatal Catastrophes of the World were by *Fire* and *Water*. In like manner the *Persians* made their beloved God, *Fire*, at length to consume all things that are capable of being consum'd. For that is said to have been the doctrine of *Hydaspes*, one of their great *Magi* or Wise men. As to the *Phœnicians*, I suspect very much that the Stoicks had their Philosophy from them, and amongst other things the Conflagration. We shall take notice of that hereafter.

*Just. Mar.
Apol. 2.*

But to comprehend the *Arabians* also, and *Indians*, give me leave to reflect a little upon the story of the *Phœnix*. A story well known, and related by some ancient Authors, and is in short this. The *Phœnix*, they say, is a Bird in *Arabia*, *India*, and those Eastern parts, single in her kind, never more than one at a time, and very long-liv'd: appearing onely at the expiration of the *Great Year*, as they call it: And then she makes her self a Nest of Spices, which being set on fire by the Sun, or some other secret power, she hovers upon it, and consumes her self in the flames. But, which is most wonderful, out of these ashes riseth a second *Phœnix*; so that it is not so much a death as a renovation. I do not doubt but the story is a fable, as to any such kind of Bird, single in her species, living and dying, and reviving in that manner: But 'tis an Apologue, or a Fable with an interpretation, and was intended as an Emblem of the World: which, after

after a long age, will be consum'd in the last fire: and from its ashes or remains will arise another world, or a new-form'd Heavens and Earth. This, I think, is the true mystery of the *Phoenix*, under which Symbol the Eastern Nations preserv'd the doctrine of the Conflagration and renovation of the World. They tell somewhat a like story of the Eagle, soaring a-loft so near the Sun, that by his warmth and enlivening rays, she renews her age and becomes young again. To this the *Psalmist* is thought to allude: *Psal. 103. 5. Thy Youth shall be renew'd like the Eagles*: which the *Chaldee Paraphrast* renders, *In mundo venturo renovabis, sicut Aquilæ, juventutem tuam*. These things to me seem plainly to be symbolical, representing that World to come, which the Paraphrast mentions, and the firing of this. And this is after the manner of the Eastern Wisdom; which always lov'd to go fine, cloath'd in figures and fancies.

And not onely the Eastern *Barbarians*, but the Northern and Western also, had this doctrine of the Conflagration amongst them. The *Scythians*, in their dispute with the *Aegyptians* about antiquity, argue upon both suppositions, of Fire or Water, destroying the last World, or beginning this. And in the West, the *Celts*, the most ancient People there, had the same tradition; for the *Druids*, who were their Priests and Philosophers, deriv'd, not from the *Greeks*, but of the old race of Wise men, that had their Learning traditionally, and, as it were, hereditary from the first ages: These, as *Strabo* tells us, gave the World a kind of immortality by repeated renovations; and the principle that destroy'd it, according to them, was always Fire or Water. I had forgot to mention in this List, the *Chaldeans*: whose opinion we have from *Berosus* in *Nat. Quest.* *Seneca*. They did not onely teach the Conflagration, 3. c. 29. but also fixt it to a certain period of time, when there should happen a great Conjunction of the Planets in *Cancer*. Lastly, we may add, to close the account, the Modern *Indian* Philosophers; the reliques of the old *Brägmans*; These, as *Masseus* tells us, declare, that the World will be renew'd, after an Universal Conflagration. *l. 16. Hist. Ind.*

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Epist. 60.

You see of what extent and universality throughout all Nations, this doctrine of the Conflagration hath been. Let us now consider what defects or excesses there are, in these ancient opinions, concerning this fate of the World, and how they may be rectified: That we may admit them no further into our belief, than they are warranted by reason, or by the authority of Christian Religion. The first fault they seem to have committed about this point, is this, That they made these revolutions and renovations of nature, indefinite or endless: as if there would be such a succession of Deluges and Conflagrations to all eternity. This, the *Stoicks* seem plainly to have asserted, as appears from *Eumenius*, *Philo*, *Simplicius*, and Others. *St. Jerome* imputes this Opinion also to *Origen*: but he does not always hit the true sense of that Father, or is not fair and just in the representation of it. Whosoever held this Opinion, 'tis a manifest error, and may be easily rectified by the Christian Revelation; which teaches us plainly, that there is a final period and consummation of all things that belong to this Sublunary or Terrestrial world. When the *Kingdom shall be deliver'd up to the Father*: and Time shall be no more.

Another Error they committed in this doctrine, is, the Identity, or sameness, if I may so say, of the worlds, succeeding one another. They are made indeed of the same Lump of matter, but they suppos'd them to return also in the same Form. And, which is worse, that there would be the same face of humane affairs; The same Persons and the same actions over again; So as the second World would be but a bare repetition of the former, without any variety or diversity. Such a revolution is commonly call'd the *Platonick Year*: A period, when all things return to the same posture they had some thousands of years before; As a Play acted over again, upon the same Stage, and to the same Auditory. This is a groundless and injudicious supposition. For, whether we consider the nature of things; The Earth after a dissolution, by Fire or by Water, could not return into the same form and fashion it had before; Or whether we consider

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Providence, it would no ways suit with the Divine Wisdom and Justice to bring upon the stage again those very Scenes, and that very course of humane affairs, which it had so lately condemn'd and destroy'd. We may be assured therefore, that, upon the dissolution of a World, a new order of things, both as to Nature and Providence, always appears: And what that new order will be, in both respects, after the *Conflagration*, I hope we shall, in the following Book, give a satisfactory account.

These are the opinions, true or false, of the Ancients; and chiefly of the *Stoicks*, concerning the mystery of the Conflagration. It will not be improper to enquire in the last place, how the *Stoicks* came by this doctrine: whether it was their discovery and invention, or from whom they learned it. That it was not their own invention, we have given sufficient ground to believe, by shewing the antiquity of it beyond the times of the *Stoicks*. Besides, what a man invents himself, he can give the reasons and causes of it, as things upon which he founded his invention: But the *Stoicks* do not this, but according to the ancient traditional way, deliver the conclusion without proof or premisses. We nam'd *Heraclitus* and *Empedocles* amongst the *Greeks* to have taught this doctrine before the *Stoicks*: And, according to *Plutarch*, *Hesiod* and *Orpheus*, authors of the highest antiquity, sung of this last Fire, in their Philosophick Poetry. De defect. Orac. But I suspect the *Stoicks* had this doctrine from the *Phenicians*; for if we enquire into the original of that Sect, we shall find that their Founder *Zeno*, was a Barbarian or Semi-barbarian, deriv'd from the *Phenicians*, as *Laertius* and *Cicero* give an account of him. And the *Phenicians* had a great share in the Oriental knowledge, as we see by *Sanchoniathon's* remains in *Eusebius*. And by their mystical Books which *Suidas* mentions, from whence *Pherecydes*, *Pythagoras* his Master, had his learning. We may therefore reasonably presume that it might be from his Countrey-men, the *Phenicians*, that *Zeno* had the doctrine of the *Conflagration*. Not that he brought it first into *Greece*, but strongly reviv'd it, and made it almost peculiar to his Sect.

So much for the *Stoicks* in particular, and the *Greeks* in general. We have also, you see, trac'd these Opinions higher, to the first Barbarick Philosophers: who were the first race of Philosophers after the Flood. But *Josephus* tells a formal story of Pillars set up by *Seth*, before the Flood; implying the foreknowledge of this Fiery destruction of the World, even from the beginning of it. His words are to this effect, give what credit to them you think fit. *Seth* and his fellow students having found out the knowledge of the celestial Bodies, and the order and disposition of the Universe; and having also receiv'd from Adam a Prophecy, that the World should have a double destruction, one by Water, another by Fire; To preserve and transmit their knowledge, in either case, to posterity, They raised two Pillars, one of Brick, another of Stone, and engrav'd upon them their Philosophy and inventions. And one of these pillars, the Author says, was standing in Syria, even to his time. I do not press the belief of this story; there being nothing, that I know of, in Antiquity Sacred or prophane, that gives a joint testimony with it. And those that set up these Pillars, do not seem to me to have understood the nature of the Deluge or Conflagration; if they thought a Pillar, either of Brick or Stone, would be secure, in those great dissolutions of the Earth. But we have pursued this doctrine high enough without the help of these antediluvian Antiquities: namely, to the earliest people and the first appearances of Wisdom after the Flood. So that, I think, we may justly look upon it as the doctrine of *Noah*, and of his immediate posterity. And as that is the highest source of learning to the present World; so we should endeavour to carry our Philosophical Traditions to that Original: for I cannot perswade my self but that they had amongst them, even in those early days, the main strokes or conclusions of the best Philosophy: or, if I may so say, a form of sound doctrine concerning Nature and Providence. Of which matter, if you will allow me a short digression, I will speak my thoughts in a few words.

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In those first Ages of the World after the Flood, when *Noah* and his Children peopled the Earth again, as he gave them Precepts of morality and piety for the conduct of their manners: which are usually call'd *Præcepta Noachidarum*, the *Precepts of Noah*, frequently mention'd both by the Jews and Christians: So also he deliver'd to them, at least, if we judge aright, certain Maxims or Conclusions about Providence, the state of Nature, and the fate of the World: And these, in proportion, may be call'd *Dogmata Noachidarum*, the *Doctrines of Noah*, and his Children. Which made a Systeme of Philosophy or secret knowledge amongst them, deliver'd by Tradition from Father to Son; but especially preserv'd amongst their Priests and Sacred Persons, or such others as were addicted to Contemplation. This I take to be more ancient than *Moses* himself, or the *Jewish Nation*. But it would lead me too far out of my way, to set down in this place, the reasons of my judgment. Let it be sufficient to have pointed onely at this Fountain-head of knowledge, and so return to our Argument.

We have heard, as it were, a Cry of Fire, throughout all Antiquity, and throughout all the People of the Earth. But those alarms are sometimes false, or make a greater noise than the thing deserves. For my part, I never trust Antiquity barely upon its own account, but always require a second witness, either from Nature, or from Scripture: What the voice of Nature is, we shall hear all along in the following Treatise: Let us then examine at present, what testimony the Prophets and Apostles give to this ancient doctrine of the Conflagration of the World. The Prophets see the World a-fire at a distance and more imperfectly, as a brightness in the Heavens, rather than a burning flame: but *St. Peter* describes it, as if he had been standing by, and seen the Heavens and Earth in a red fire: heard the cracking flames and the tumbling Mountains: 2 *Pet.* 3. 10. In the day of the Lord, *The Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent heat: The Earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.* Then, after a pious Ejaculation, he adds, *Ver.* 12. *Looking*
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for and hastening the coming of the day of God, wherein the Heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved; and the Elements shall melt with fervent heat. This is as lively, as a Man could express it, if he had the dreadful spectacle before his Eyes. St. Peter had before taught the same doctrine (*ver. 5, 6, 7.*) but in a more Philosophick way; describing the double fate of the World, by water and fire, with relation to the Nature and Constitution of either World, past or present. *The Heavens and the Earth were of old, consisting of water and by water: whereby, the World that then was, being overflow'd with water, perished. But the Heavens and the Earth which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of Judgment, and perdition of ungodly, or Atheistical men.* This testimony of St. Peter being full, direct, and explicit, will give light and strength to several other passages of Scripture, where the same thing is express'd obscurely or by allusion. As when St. Paul says, *The fire shall try every mans work in that day.* And our Saviour says, *The tares shall be burnt in the fire, at the end of the World.* Accordingly it is said, both by the Apostles and Prophets, that God will come to judgment in Fire. St. Paul to the Thessalonians, promiseth the persecuted Righteous, rest and ease, *When the Lord shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire: taking vengeance on them that know not God, &c.* And so to the Hebrews, St. Paul says, that for wilful Apostates there remaineth no more Sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries, or enemies of God. And in the 12th. Chapter, he alludes to the same thing, when after he had spoken of shaking the Heavens and the Earth once more, he exhorteth, as St. Peter does upon the same occasion, to reverence and godly fear, *For our God is a consuming Fire.*

In like manner the Prophets, when they speak of destroying the wicked, and the Enemies of God and Christ, at the end of the world, represent it as a destruction by Fire. Psalm the 11th. 6. *Upon the wicked the Lord shall rain coals, fire, and brimstone, and a burning tempest: This shall be the portion of their Cup.* And Psal. 50. 3. *Our God shall come, and will not be slow: A fire*

1 Cor. 3. 12,
13.

Mat. 13. 40,
41, 42.

2 Thess. 2. 7, 8.

1 Th. 10. 27.

Ver. 26, 27,
28, 29.

fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. And in the beginning of those two triumphal Psalms, the sixty-eight, and ninety-seventh, we see plain allusions to this coming of the Lord in fire. The other Prophets speak in the same style, Of a fiery indignation against the wicked, in the day of the Lord: As in *Isaiah 66. 15.* *For behold the Lord will come with fire, and with his Chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.* And in *Daniel, (c. 7. 9, 10.)* The Ancient of days is plac'd upon his Seat of Judgment, cover'd in flames. *I beheld till the Thrones were set, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: His Throne was like the fiery flame, his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: Thousand thousands ministred unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: The judgment was set, and the Books were opened.* The Prophet *Malachy (c. 4. 1.)* describes the Day of the Lord to the same effect, and in like colours; *Behold the Day cometh, that shall burn as an Oven: and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.* And that nature her self, and the Earth shall suffer in that fire, the Prophet *Zephany* tells us, *(c. 3. 8.) All the Earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.* Lastly, this consumption of the Earth by fire, even to the foundations of it, is exprest livelily by *Moses* in his Song, *Deut. 32. 22.* *A fire is kindled in my anger, and shall burn unto the lowest Hell: and shall consume the Earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the Mountains.*

If we reflect upon these Witnesses; and especially the first and last, *Moses* and *St. Peter*: at what a great distance of time they writ their Prophecies, and yet how well they agree, we must needs conclude that they were acted by the same Spirit: and a Spirit that see thorough all the Ages of the World, from the beginning to the end. These Sacred Writers were so far distant in time from one another, that they could not confer together, nor conspire, either in a false testimony,

mony, or to make the same prediction. But being under one common influence and inspiration, which is always consistent with it self, they have dictated the same things, tho' at two thousand years distance sometimes from one another. This besides many other considerations, makes their authority incontestable. And upon the whole account, you see, that the doctrine of the future *Conflagration of the World*, having run through all Ages and Nations, is, by the joynt consent of the Prophets and Apostles, adopted into the Christian Faith.

C H A P. IV.

Concerning the time of the Conflagration, and the end of the World. What the Astronomers say upon this Subject, and upon what they ground their Calculations; The true notion of the Great Year, or of the Platonick Year, stated and explained.

HAVING, in this first Section, laid a sure foundation as to the Subject of our Discourse; the truth and certainty of the *Conflagration* whereof we are to treat; we will now proceed to enquire after the *Time, Causes, and Manner* of it. We are naturally more inquisitive after the end of the World, and the time of that fatal revolution, than after the causes of it: for these, we know, are irresistible, whensoever they come, and therefore we are only solicitous that they should not overtake us, or our near posterity. The *Romans* thought they had the fates of their Empire in the Books of the Sibyls, which were kept by the Magistrates as a Sacred Treasure. We have also our Prophetical Books, more sacred and more infallible than theirs, which contain the fate of all the

the Kingdoms of the Earth, and of that glorious Kingdom that is to succeed. And of all futurities, there is none can be of such importance to be enquired after, as this last scene and close of all humane affairs.

If I thought it possible to determine the time of the *Conflagration* from the bare intuition of Natural Causes, I would not treat of it in this place, but reserve it to the last; after we had brought into view all those Causes, weigh'd their force, and examin'd how and when they would concur to produce this great effect. But I am satisfied that the excitation and concurrence of those Causes does not depend upon Nature only; and tho' the Causes may be sufficient when all united, yet the union of them at such a time, and in such a manner, I look upon as the effect of a particular Providence: and therefore no foresight of ours, or inspection into Nature can discover to us the time of this conjuncture. This method therefore of Prediction from Natural Causes being laid aside as impracticable, all other methods may be treated of in this place, as being independent upon any thing that is to follow in the Treatise; and it will be an ease to the Argument to discharge it of this part, and clear the way by degrees to the principal point, which is, the *Causes* and *Manner* of the Conflagration.

Some have thought it a kind of impiety in a Christian to enquire after the end of the World; because of that check which our Saviour gave his Disciples, when, after his Resurrection, enquiring of him about the time of his Kingdom, He answer'd, *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.* And, before his death, when he was discoursing of the Consummation of all things, He told them expressly, that tho' there should be such and such previous Signs as he had mentioned, yet, *Of that day and hour knoweth no man. No, not the Angels that are in Heaven, but my Father only.* Be it so, that the Disciples deserv'd a reprimand, for desiring to know, by a particular revelation from our Saviour, the state of future times; when many other

Act. 1. 7.

Mat. 24. 36.

things were more necessary for their instruction, and for their ministry. Be it also admitted, that the Angels, at that distance of time, could not see thorough all events to the end of the World; it does not at all follow from thence that they do not know it now; when, in the course of Sixteen hundred years, many things are come to pass, that may be marks and directions to them to make a judgment of what remains, and of the last period of all things. However there will be no danger in our enquiries about this matter, seeing they are not so much to discover the certainty, as the uncertainty of that period, as to humane knowledge. Let us therefore consider what methods have been used, by those that have been curious and busie to measure the duration of the World.

Cicer. de
Nat. D. l. 2.

The *Stoicks* tell us, *When* the Sun and the Stars have drunk up the Sea, then the Earth shall be burnt. A very fair Prophecy: but how long will they be a drinking? For unless we can determine that, we cannot determine when this combustion will begin. Many of the Ancients thought that the Stars were nourish'd by the vapours of the Ocean and of the moist Earth: and when that nourishment was spent, being of a fiery nature, they would prey upon the Body of the Earth it self, and consume that, after they had consum'd the Water. This is old-fashion'd Philosophy, and now, that the nature of those Bodies is better known, will scarce pass for currant. 'Tis true, we must expect some dispositions towards the combustion of the World, from a great drought and desiccation of the Earth: But this helps us nothing on our way; for the question still returns, *When* will this immoderate drought or dryness happen? and that's as ill to resolve as the former. Therefore, as I said before, I have no hopes of deciding the question by Physiology or Natural Causes; let us then look up from the Earth to the Heavens, To the Astronomers and the Prophets; These think they can define the age and duration of the World; The one by their Art, and the other by Inspiration.

We begin with the Astronomers: whose Calculations are founded either upon the Aspects and Configurations

figurations of the Planets, or upon the Revolutions of the Fixt Stars: or lastly upon that which they call *Annus Magnus*, or the *Great Year*, whatsoever that Notion proves to be when it is rightly interpreted. As to the Planets, *Berosus* tells us, The *Chaldeans* suppose Deluges to proceed from a great conjunction of the Planets in *Capricorn*: and from a like conjunction in the opposite Sign of *Cancer*, the Conflagration will ensue. So that if we compute by the Astronomical Tables how long it will be to such a Conjunction, we find at the same time how long it will be to the Conflagration. This doctrine of the *Chaldeans* some Christian Authors have owned, and followed the same principles and method.

If these Authors would deal fairly with Mankind, they should shew us some connexion betwixt these Causes and the Effects which they make consequent upon them. For 'tis an unreasonable thing to require a man's assent to a Proposition, where he sees no dependance or connexion of Terms; unless it come by Revelation, or from an infallible Authority. If you say, The Conflagration will be at the first great Conjunction of the Planets in *Cancer*, and I say it will be at the next Eclipse of the Moon, if you shew no more reason for your assertion than I do for mine, and neither of us pretend to revelation or infallibility, we may justly expect to be equally credited. Pray what reason can you give why the Planets, when they meet, should plot together, to set on Fire their Fellow-Planet, the Earth, who never did them any harm? But now there is a plausible reason for my opinion; for the Moon, when Eclips'd may think herself affronted by the Earth, interposing rudely betwixt her and the Sun, and leaving her to grope her way in the dark; She therefore may justly take her revenge as she can. But you'll say, 'tis not in the power of the Moon to set the Earth on Fire, if she had malice enough to do it. No, nor, say I, is it in the power of the other Planets, that are far more distant from the Earth than the Moon, and as stark dull lumps of Earth, as she is. The plain truth is, The Planets are so many Earths; and our Earth is as

much a Planet as the brightest of them. 'Tis carried about the Sun with the same common stream, and shines with as much lustre to them, as they do to us: neither can they do any more harm to it, than it can do to them. 'Tis now well known, that the Planets are dark opaque Bodies, generally made up of Earth and Water, as our Globe is; and have no force or action, but that of reverberating the light which the Sun casts upon them. This blind superstitious fear or reverence for the Stars, had its original from the ancient Idolaters; They thought them Gods, and that they had domination over humane affairs. We do not indeed worship them, as they did; but some men retain still the same opinion of their virtues, of their rule and influence upon us and our affairs, which was the ground of their worship. 'Tis full time now to sweep away these cobwebs of superstition, these reliques of Paganism. I do not see how we are any more concern'd in the postures of the Planets, than in the postures of the Clouds; and you may as well build an art of prediction or divination upon the one as the other. They must not know much of the Philosophy of the Heavens, or little consider it, that think the fate, either of single persons, or of the whole Earth, can depend upon the aspects or figur'd dances of those Bodies.

But you'll say, it may be, tho' no reason can be given for such effects, yet experience does attest the truth of them. In the first place, I answer, no experience can be produc'd for this effect we are speaking of, the conflagration of the World. Secondly, experience fallaciously recorded, or wholly in favour of one side, is no proof. If a publick Register was kept of all Astrological Predictions, and of all the events that followed upon them, right or wrong, agreeing or disagreeing, I could willingly refer the cause to the determination of such a Register, and such experience. But that which they call experience, is so stated, that if one prediction of ten, hits right or near right, it shall make more noise, and be more taken notice of, than all the nine that are false. Just as in a Lottery, where many Blanks are drawn for one Prize, yet
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these make all the noise, and those are forgotten. If any one be so lucky as to draw a good Lot, then the Trumpet sounds, and his Name is register'd, and he tells his good fortune to every body he meets: whereas those that lose, go silently away with empty Pockets, and are asham'd to tell their losses. Such a thing is the Register of Astrological experiences; they record what makes for their credit, but drop all blank instances, that would discover the vanity or cheat of their Art.

So much for the Planets. They have also a pretended calculation of the end of the World from the fixt Stars and the Firmament. Which in short is this: They suppose these Bodies, besides the hurry of their Diurnal motion from East to West, quite round the Earth in four and twenty hours, to have another retrograde motion, from West to East; which is more slow and leisurely; And when they have finish'd the Circle of this retrogradation, and come up again to the same place from whence they started at the beginning of the World, then this course of Nature will be at an end; and either the Heavens will cease from all motion, or a new set of motions will be put a foot, and the world begin again. This is a bundle of fictions tied up in a pretty knot. In the first place, there is no such thing as a solid Firmament, in which the Stars are fixt, as nails in a board. The Heavens are as fluid as our air, and the higher we go, the more thin and subtle is the ethereal matter. Then, the fixt Stars are not all in one Surface, as they seem to us, nor at an equal distance from the Earth, but are plac'd in several Orbs higher and higher; there being infinite room in the great Deep of the Heavens, every way, for innumerable Stars and Spheres behind one another, to fill and beautify the immense spaces of the Universe. Lastly, the fixt Stars have no motion common to them all, nor any motion singly, unless upon their own centres; and therefore, never leaving their stations, they can never return to any common station, which they would suppose them to have had at the beginning of the World. So as this period they speak of, whereby they would measure the duration
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of the World, is meerly imaginary, and hath no foundation in the true nature or motion of the celestial Bodies.

But in the third place, They speak of an ANNUS MAGNUS, a *Great Year*; A revolution so call'd, whatsoever it is, that is of the same extent with the length of the world. This notion, I confess, is more ancient and universal, and therefore I am the more apt to believe that it is not altogether groundless. But the difficulty is, to find out the true notion of this *Great Year*, what is to be understood by it, and then of what length it is. They all agree that it is a time of some grand instauration of all things, or a Restitution of the Heavens and the Earth to their former state; that is, to the state and posture they had at the beginning of the world; such therefore as will reduce the Golden age, and that happy state of nature wherein things were at first. If so, if these be the marks and properties of this Revolution, which is call'd the *Great Year*, we need not go so far to find the true notion and interpretation of it. Those that have read the first part of this Theory, may remember that in the second Book we gave an account what the posture of the Earth was at the beginning of the world, and what were the consequences of that posture, *A perpetual Spring* and *Equinox* throughout all the Earth: And if the Earth was restor'd again to that posture and situation, all that is imputed to the *Great Year*, would immediately follow upon it, without ever disturbing or moving the fix'd Stars, Firmament, or Planets; and yet at the same time all these three would return or be restor'd to the same posture they had at the beginning of the world; so as the whole character of the *Great Year* would be truly fulfill'd, tho' not in that way which they imagin'd; but in another, more compendious, and of easier conception. My meaning is this, If the Axis of the Earth was rectified, and set parallel with the Axis of the Ecliptick, upon which the Planets, Firmament and fix'd Stars are suppos'd to move, all things would be as they were at first; A general harmony and conformity of all the motions of the Universe would presently appear, such, as they say, was
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in the Golden Age, before any disorder came into the natural or moral World.

As this is an easie, so I do not doubt, but it is a true account of that which was originally call'd the *Great Year*, or the Great Instauration; which nature will bring to pass in this simple method, by rectifying the Axis of the Earth, without those operose revolutions, which some Astronomers have fancied. But however, this account being admitted, how will it help us to define what the Age and duration of the World will be? 'Tis true, many have undertaken to tell us the length of this *Great Year*, and consequently of the World; but, besides that their accounts are very different, and generally of an extravagant length, if we had the true account, it would not assure us when the World would end; because we do not know when it did begin, or what progress we have already made in the line of time. For I am satisfied, the Chronology of the World, whether sacred or prophane, is lost; till Providence shall please to retrieve it by some new discovery. As to prophane Chronology, or that of the *Heathens*, the *Greeks* and the *Romans* knew nothing above the *Olympiads*; which fell short many Ages of the Deluge, much more of the beginning of the World. And the Eastern barbarous Nations, as they disagreed amongst themselves, so generally they run the origine of the World to such a prodigious height, as is neither agreeable to Faith, nor Reason. As to Sacred Chronology, 'tis well known, that the difference there is betwixt the *Greek*, *Hebrew*, and *Samaritan* Copies of the Bible, makes the Age of the World altogether undetermin'd: And there is no way yet found out, how we may certainly discover which of the three Copies is most Authentick, and consequently what the Age of the World is, upon a true computation. Seeing therefore we have no assurance how long the World hath stood already, neither could we be assur'd how long it hath to stand, though, by this *Annus Magnus*, or any other way, the total sum, or whole term of its duration was truly known.

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I am sorry to see the little success we have had in our first search after the end of the World, from Astronomical Calculations. But 'tis an useful piece of knowledge to know the bounds of our knowledge; that so we may not spend our time and thoughts about things that lie out of our reach. I have little or no hopes of resolving this point by the Light of Nature, and therefore it only remains now to enquire, Whether Providence hath made it known by any sort of Prophecy or Revelation. Which shall be the Subject of the following Chapter.

CHAP. V.

Concerning Prophecies that determine the end of the World; Of what order soever, Prophane or Sacred: Jewish or Christian. That no certain judgment can be made from any of them, at what distance we are now from the Conflagration.

THE bounds of humane knowledge are so narrow, and the desire of knowing so vast and illimited, that it often puts Mankind upon irregular methods of inlarging their knowledge. This hath made them find out arts of commerce with evil Spirits, to be instructed by them in such Events as they could not of themselves discover. We meddle not with those mysteries of iniquity: but what hath appear'd under the notion of Divine Prophecy, relating to the Chronology of the World: giving either the whole extent of it, or certain marks of its expiration: these we purpose to examine in this place. How far any thing may, or may not, be concluded from them, as to the resolution of our Problem, *How long the World will last.*

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Amongst the Heathens I do not remember any Prophecies of this nature, except the *Sibylline Oracles*; as they are usually call'd. The ancient Eastern Philosophers have left us no account that I can call to mind, about the time of this fatality. They say when the *Phoenix* returns we must expect the Conflagration to follow; but the age of the *Phoenix* they make as various and uncertain, as they do the computation of their *Great Year*: which two things are indeed one and the same in effect. Some of them, I confess, mention Six Thousand years for the whole age of the World: which being the famous Prophecy of the *Jews*, we shall speak to it largely hereafter: and reduce to that head what broken Traditions remain amongst the Heathens of the same thing. As to the *Sibylline Oracles*, which were so much in reputation amongst the *Greeks* and *Romans*, they have been tamper'd with so much, and chang'd so often, that they are become now of little authority. They seem to have divided the duration of the World into Ten Ages, and the last of these they make a Golden Age, a state of peace, righteousness and perfection: but seeing they have not determin'd, in any definite numbers, what the length of every Age will be, nor given us the summ of all, we cannot draw any conclusion from this account as to the point in question before us. But must proceed to the Jewish and Christian Oracles.

*Symbolum
ἀποκατα-
στάσεως
πολυχρονία,
Phoenix. Hor.
Apol. l. 2. c. 57.*

The *Jews* have a remarkable Prophecy, which expresseth both the whole and the parts of the World's duration. The World, they say, will stand Six Thousand Years: *Two thousand before the Law, Two thousand under the Law, and Two thousand under the Messiah*. This Prophecy they derive from *Elias*; but there were two of the Name, *Elias the Thesbite*, and *Elias the Rabbin*, or *Cabalist*: and 'tis suppos'd to belong immediately to the later of these. Yet this does not hinder, in my opinion, but that it might come originally from the former *Elias*, and was preserv'd in the School of this *Elias the Rabbin*, and first made publick by him. Or he added, it may be, that division of the time into three parts, and so got a Title to the

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whole. I cannot easily imagine that a Doctor that liv'd two hundred years, or thereabouts, before Christ, when Prophecy had ceas'd for some Ages amongst the *Jews*, should take upon him to dictate a Prophecy about the duration of the World, unless he had been supported by some antecedent Cabalistical Tradition: which, being kept more secret before, he took the liberty to make publick, and so was reputed the Author of the Prophecy. As many Philosophers amongst the *Greeks*, were the reputed Authors of such doctrines as were much more ancient than themselves: But they were the publishers of them in their Country, or the revivers of them after a long silence; and so, by forgetful posterity, got the honour of the first invention.

You will think, it may be, the time is too long and the distance too great betwixt *Elias* the *Thesbite*, and this *Elias* the *Rabbin*, for a Tradition to subsist all the while, or be preserv'd with any competent integrity. But it appears from *S. Jude's* Epistle, that the *Prophecies of Enoch*, (who liv'd before the Flood) relating to the day of judgment and the end of the World, were extant in his time, either in writing or by Tradition: And the distance betwixt *Enoch* and *S. Jude* was vastly greater than betwixt the two *Elias's*. Nor was any fitter to be inspir'd with that knowledge, or to tell the first news of that fatal period, than the old Prophet *Elias*, who is to come again and bring the alarm of the approaching Conflagration. But however this conjecture may prove as to the original Author of this Prophecy, the Prophecy it self concerning the *Sexmillennial* duration of the World, is very much insisted upon by the Christian Fathers. Which yet I believe is not so much for the bare Authority of the Tradition, as because they thought it was founded in the History of the *Six days Creation*, and the *Sabbath* succeeding: as also in some other Typical precepts and usages in the Law of *Moses*. But before we speak of that, give me leave to name some of those Fathers to you, that were of this judgment, and supposed the great Sabbathism would succeed after the World had stood Six thousand years.

Of

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Of this opinion was S. Barnabas in his Catholick Epistle, ch. 15. Where he argues that the Creation will be ended in Six Thousand years, as it was finish'd in Six Days: Every day according to the Sacred and mystical account, being a Thousand Years. Of the same judgment is S. Irenæus, both as to the conclusion and the reason of it. He saith, the History of the Creation in six days, is a narration as to what is pass'd, and a Prophecy of what is to come. As the Work was said to be consummated in six days, and the Sabbath to be the seventh: So the consummation of all things will be in six thousand years, and then the great Sabbatism to come on in the blessed reign of Christ. Hippolitus Martyr, disciple of Irenæus, is of the same judgment, as you may see in Photius, ch. 202. Lactantius in his Divine Institutions, li. 7. c. 14. gives the very same account of the state and continuance of the World, and the same proofs for it. And so does S. Cyprian, in his Exhortation to Martyrdom, ch. 11. S. Jerome more than once declares himself of the same opinion; and S. Austin, tho' he wavers and was doubtful as to the Millennium, or Reign of Christ upon Earth, yet he receives this computation without hesitancy, and upon the foremention'd grounds. So Johannes Damascenus de fide Orthodoxa, takes seven Millenaries for the entire space of the World, from the Creation to the general Resurrection, the Sabbatism being included. And that this was a received and approv'd opinion in early times, we may collect from the Author of the Questions and answers ad Orthodoxos in Justin Martyr. Who giving an answer to that enquiry about the six thousand-years-term of the World, says, We may conjecture from many places of Scripture, that those are in the right, that say six thousand years is the time prefixt for the duration of this present frame of the World. These Authors I have examin'd my self: but there are many others brought in confirmation of this opinion: as S. Hilary, Anastatius Sinaita, Sanctus Gaudentius, Q. Julius Hilarion, Junilius Africanus, Isidorus Hispalensis, Cassiodorus, Gregorius Magnus, and others, which I leave to be examin'd by those that have curiosity and leisure to do it.

Li. 5. c. 28.
29, 30.

C. D. li. 20.
c. 7.

In the mean time it must be confest that many of these Fathers were under a mistake in one respect, in that they generally thought, the World was near an end in their time. An error, which we need not take pains to confute now; seeing we, who live twelve hundred or fourteen hundred years after them, find the World still in being, and likely to continue so for some considerable time. But it is easie to discern whence their mistake proceeded: not from this Prophecy alone, but because they reckon'd this Prophecy according to the Chronology of the Septuagint: which setting back the beginning of the World many Ages beyond the *Hebrew*, these six thousand years were very near expir'd in the time of those Fathers; and that made them conclude that the World was very near an end. We will make no reflections, in this place, upon that Chronology of the Septuagint, lest it should too much interrupt the thred of our discourse. But it is necessary to show how the Fathers grounded this computation of six thousand years, upon Scripture. 'Twas chiefly, as we suggested before, upon the *Hexameron*, or the Creation finish'd in *six days*, and the *Sabbath* ensuing. The Sabbath, they said, was a type of the Sabbatism, that was to follow at the end of the World, according to St. *Paul* to the *Hebrews*; and then by analogy and consequence, the six days preceding the Sabbath, must note the space and duration of the World. If therefore they could discover how much a Day is reckon'd for, in this mystical computation, the sum of the six days would be easily found out. And they think, that according to the Psalmist, (*Psal.* 90. 4.) and St. *Peter*, (*2 Epist.* 3. 8.) a Day may be estimated a thousand years; and consequently six days must be counted six thousand years, for the duration of the World. This is their interpretation, and their inference: but it must be acknowledged, that there is an essential weakness in all typical and allegorical argumentations, in comparison of literal. And this being allow'd in diminution of the proof, we may be bold to say, that nothing yet appears, either in nature, or Scripture, or humane affairs, repugnant to this supposition of six thousand years:

years: which hath Antiquity, and the Authority of the Fathers, on its side.

We proceed now to the Christian Prophecies concerning the end of the World. I do not mention those in *Daniel*, because I am not satisfied that any there (excepting that of the fifth kingdom it self) extend so far. But in the *Apocalypse* of St. *John*, which is the last Revelation we are to expect, there are several Prophecies that reach to the Consummation of this World, and the first Resurrection. The *seven Seals*, the *seven Trumpets*, the *seven Vials*, do all terminate upon that great period. But they are rather Historical Prophecies than Chronological: they tell us, in their Language, the Events, but do not measure or express the time wherein they come to pass. Others there are that may be call'd Chronological, as the *Treading under foot the holy City, forty and two months*. Apoc. 11. 2. The *Witnesses* opposing Antichrist, *one thousand two hundred and sixty days*, Apoc. 11. 3. The flight of the *Woman into the Wilderness*, for the same number of days, or for a *Time, Times, and half a Time*. Apoc. 12. 6. & 14. And lastly, the War of the Beast against the Saints, *forty two months*, Apoc. 13. 5. These all, you see, express a time for their completion; And all the same time, if I be not mistaken: but they do not reach to the end of the World. Or if some of them did reach so far, yet because we do not certainly know where to fix their beginning, we must still be at a loss, when, or in what year they will end. As for instance, If the Reign of the Beast, or the preaching of the Witnesses be 1260. years, as is reasonably suppos'd; yet if we do not know certainly when this Reign, or this preaching begun, neither can we tell when it will end. And the Epocha's or beginnings of these Prophecies are so differently calculated, and are things of so long debate, as makes the discussion of them altogether improper for this place. Yet it must be confest, that the best conjectures that can be made concerning the approaching end of the World, must be taken from a judicious examination of these points: and according as we gather up the Prophecies of the *Apocalypse*, in a successive completion, we see

see how by degrees we draw nearer and nearer to the conclusion of all. But till some of these enlightening Prophecies be accomplish'd, we are as a Man that awakes in the Night, all is dark about him, and he knows not how far the Night is spent: but if he watch till the light appears, the first glimpses of that will resolve his doubts. We must have a little patience, and, I think, but a little; still eyeing those Prophecies of the *Resurrection* of the *Witnesses*, and the *depression* of *Antichrist*: till by their accomplishment, the day dawn, and the Clouds begin to change their colour. Then we shall be able to make a near guess, when the Sun of righteousness will arise.

So much for Prophecies. There are also *Signs*, which are look'd upon as forerunners of the coming of our Saviour: and therefore may give us some direction how to judge of the distance or approach of that great Day. Thus many of the Fathers thought the coming of *Antichrist* would be a sign to give the World notice of its approaching end. But we may easily see, by what hath been noted before, what it was that led the Fathers into that mistake. They thought their six thousand years were near an end, as they truly were, according to that Chronology they followed; and therefore they concluded the Reign of Antichrist must be very short, whensoever he came, and that he could not come long before the end of the World. But we are very well assur'd from the Revelation of *St. John*, that the reign of Antichrist is not to be so short and transient; and from the prospect and history of Christendom, that he hath been already upon his Throne many hundreds of Years. Therefore this Sign wholly falls to the ground; unless you will take it from the fall of Antichrist, rather than from his first entrance. Others expect the coming of *Elias* to give warning of that day, and prepare the way of the Lord. I am very willing to admit that *Elias* will come, according to the sense of the Prophet *Malachi*, but he will not come *with observation*, no more than he did in the Person of *John* the Baptist; He will not bear the name of *Elias*, nor tell us he is the Man that went to Heaven in a fiery Chariot, and is now come down again

again to give us warning of the last Fire. But some divine person may appear before the second coming of our Saviour, as there did before his first coming: and by giving a new light and life to the Christian Doctrine, may dissipate the mists of error, and abolish all those little controversies amongst good men, and the divisions and animosities that spring from them: enlarging their Spirits by greater discoveries, and uniting them all in the bonds of love and charity, and in the common study of truth and perfection. Such an *Elias*, the Prophet seems to point at; And may he come, and be the great Peace-maker and preparer of the ways of the Lord. But at present, we cannot from this Sign make any judgment when the World will end.

Another Sign preceeding the end of the World, is, *The Conversion of the Jews*; and this is a wonderful sign indeed. *S. Paul* seems expressly to affirm it, *Rom. 11. 25, 26.* But it is differently understood, either of their Conversion only, or of their Restoration to their own Countrey, Liberties and Dominion. The Prophets bear hard upon this sence sometimes, as you may see in *Isaiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos.* And to the same purpose the ancient promise of *Moses* is interpreted, *Deut. 30.* Yet this seems to be a thing very unconceivable; unless we suppose the Ten Tribes to be still in some hidden corner of the World, from whence they may be conducted again into their own Countrey, as once out of *Egypt*, by a miraculous Providence, and establish'd there. Which being known, will give the alarum to all the other *Jews* in the World, and make an universal confluence to their old home. Then our Saviour by an extraordinary appearance to them, as once to *S. Paul*: and by Prophets rais'd up amongst them for that purpose, may convince them that he is the true Messiah, and convert them to the Christian Faith; which will be no more strange, than was the first Conversion of the Gentile World. But if we be content with a Conversion of the *Jews*, without their restoration; and of those Two Tribes only which are now disperst throughout the Christian World and other known parts

*Joh. 19. 37.
Apoc. 1. 7.
Mat. 23. 39.*

parts of the Earth: That these should be Converted to the Christian Faith, and incorporated into the Christian Commonwealth, losing their national character and distinction. If this, I say, will satisfy the Prophecies, it is not a thing very difficult to be conceived. For when the World is reduc'd to a better and purer state of Christianity, and that Idolatry in a great measure, remov'd, which gave the greatest scandal to the *Jews*, they will begin to have better thoughts of our Religion, and be dispos'd to a more ingenuous and unprejudic'd examination of their Prophecies concerning the Messiah: God raising up men amongst them of divine and enlarged Spirits, Lovers of Truth more than of any particular Sect or Opinion; with light to discern it, and courage to profess it. Lastly, it will be a cogent argument upon them, to see the Age of the World so far spent, and no appearance yet of their long expected Messiah. So far spent, I say, that there is no room left, upon any computation whatsoever, for the Oeconomy of a Messiah yet to come. This will make them reflect more carefully and impartially upon him whom the Christians propose, *Jesus of Nazareth*, whom their Fathers Crucified at *Jerusalem*. Upon the Miracles he wrought, in his life and after his death: and upon the wonderful propagation of his Doctrine throughout the World, after his Ascension. And lastly, upon the desolation of *Jerusalem*, upon their own scatter'd and forlorn condition, foretold by that Prophet, as a judgment of God upon an ungrateful and wicked People.

This I have said to state the case of the Conversion of the *Jews*, which will be a sign of the approaching reign of Christ. But alas, what appearance is there of this Conversion in our days, or what judgment can we make from a sign that is not yet come to pass? 'Tis ineffectual as to us, but may be of use to posterity. Yet even to them it will not determine at what distance they are from the end of the World, but be a mark only that they are not far from it. There will be Signs also, in those last days, in the Heavens, and in the Earth, and in the Sea, fore-

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runners of the Conflagration; as the obscuration of the Sun and Moon, Earth-quakes, roarings of the troubled Sea, and such like disorders in the natural World. 'Tis true, but these are the very pangs of death, and the strugglings of Nature just before her dissolution, and it will be too late then to be aware of our ruine when it is at the door. Yet these being Signs or Prodigies taken notice of by Scripture, we intend, God willing, after we have explained the causes and manner of the Conflagration, to give an account also whence these unnatural commotions will proceed, that are the beginnings or immediate introductions to the last Fire.

Thus we have gone through the Prophecies and Signs that concern the last day and the last fate of the World. And how little have we learned from them as to the time of that great revolution? Prophecies rise sometimes with an even gradual light, as the day riseth upon the Horizon: and sometimes break out suddenly like a fire, and we are not aware of their approach till we see them accomplish'd. Those that concern the end of the World are of this latter sort to unobserving men; but even to the most observing, there will still be a latitude; We must not expect to calculate the coming of our Saviour like an Eclipse, to minutes and half-minutes. There are *Times and Seasons which the Father hath put in his own power*. If it was designed to keep these things secret, we must not think to out-wit Providence, and from the Prophecies that are given us, pick out a discovery that was not intended we should ever make. It is determin'd in the Councils of Heaven just how far we shall know these events before-hand, and with what degree of certainty: and with this we must be content whatsoever it is. The *Apocalypse* of S. John is the last Prophetical declaration of the Will of God, and contains the fate of the Christian Religion to the end of the World, its purity, degeneracy, and reviviscency. The head of this degeneracy is call'd *The Beast, the false Prophet, the whore of Babylon*, in Prophetical terms: and in an Ecclesiastical term is commonly call'd *Antichrist*. Those that bear Testimony

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against this degeneracy, are call'd the *Witnesses*: who, after they have been a long time, in a mean and persecuted condition, are to have their Resurrection and Ascension: that is, be advanc'd to power and Authority. And this Resurrection of the *Witnesses* and depression of *Antichrist*, is that which will make the great turn of the World to righteousness, and the great Crisis whereby we may judge of its drawing to an end. 'Tis true, there are other marks, as the passing away of the *Second Woe*: which is commonly thought to be the Ottoman Empire: and the Effusion of the *Vials*. The first of these will be indeed a very conspicuous mark, if it follow upon the Resurrection of the *Witnesses*, as by the Prophecy it seems to do. But as to the *Vials*, tho' they do plainly reach in a Series to the end of the World, I am not satisfied with any exposition I have yet met with, concerning their precise time or contents.

Apoc. c. 9.

Apoc. c. 16.

ch. 11. 14.

In a word, Tho' the sum and general contents of a Prophecy be very intelligible, yet the application of it to Time and Persons may be very lubricous. There must be obscurity in a Prophecy, as well as shadow in a Picture. All its lines must not stand in a full light. For if Prophecies were open and bare-fac'd as to all their parts and circumstances, they would check and obstruct the course of humane affairs; and hinder, if it was possible, their own accomplishment. Modesty and Sobriety are in all things commendable, but in nothing more than in the explication of these Sacred Mysteries; and we have seen so many miscarry by a too close and particular application of them, that we ought to dread the Rock about which we see so many shipwrecks. He that does not err above a Century in calculating the last period of Time, from what evidence we have at present, hath, in my opinion, cast up his accounts very well. But the Scenes will change fast towards the Evening of this long day, and when the Sun is near setting, they will more easily compute how far he hath to run.

C H A P. VI.

Concerning the Causes of the Conflagration.

The difficulty of conceiving how this Earth can be set on fire. With a general answer to that difficulty. Two suppos'd causes of the Conflagration, by the Sun's drawing nearer to the Earth, or the Earth's throwing out the central fire, examin'd and rejected.

WE have now made our way clear to the principal point, *The Causes of the Conflagration*: How the Heavens and the Earth will be set on fire, what materials are prepar'd, or what train of causes, for that purpose. The Ancients, who have kept us company pretty well thus far, here quite desert us. They deal more in Conclusions than Causes, as is usual in all Traditional Learning. And the *Stoicks* themselves, who inculcate so much the doctrine of the Conflagration, and make the strength of it such as to dissolve the Earth into a fiery Chaos, are yet very short and superficial in their explications, how this shall come to pass. The latent seeds of fire, they say, shall every where be let loose, and that Element will prevail over all the rest, and transform every thing into its own nature. But these are general things that give little satisfaction to inquisitive Persons. Neither do the modern Authors that treat of the same subject, relieve us in this particular: They are willing to suppose the Conflagration a supernatural effect, that so they may excuse themselves the trouble of enquiring after causes. 'Tis, no doubt, in a sort, supernatural: and so the Deluge was: yet *Moses* sets down the causes of the Deluge, the rains from above, and the disruption of the Abyss. So there must be treasures of fire provided against that day, by whose eruption this second Deluge will be brought upon the Earth.

To state the case fairly, we must first represent the difficulty of setting the Earth on fire: Tie the knot, before we loose it; that so we may the better judge whether the causes that shall be brought into view, may be sufficient to overcome so great opposition. The difficulty, no doubt, will be chiefly from the great quantity of water that is about our Globe; whereby Nature seems to have made provision against any invasion by fire, and secur'd us from that enemy more than any other. We see half of the Surface of the Earth cover'd with the Seas: whose Chanel is of a vast depth and capacity. Besides innumerable Rivers, great and small, that water the face of the dry Land, and drench it with perpetual moisture. Then within the bowels of the Earth, there are Store-houses of subterraneous waters: which are as a reserve, in case the Ocean and the Rivers should be overcome. Neither is water our onely security, for the hard Rocks and stony Mountains, which no fire can bite upon, are set in long ranges upon the Continents and Islands: and must needs give a stop to the progress of that furious Enemy, in case he should attack us. Lastly, the Earth it self is not combustible in all its parts. 'Tis not every Soyl that is fit fuel for the fire. Clay, and Mire, and such like Soyles will rather choak and stifle it, than help it on its way. By these means one would think the Body of the Earth secur'd; And tho' there may be partial fires, or inundations of fire, here and there, in particular regions, yet there cannot be an universal fire throughout the Earth. At least one would hope for a safe retreat towards the Poles, where there is nothing but Snow, and Ice, and bitter cold. These regions sure are in no danger to be burnt, whatsoever becomes of the other climates of the Earth.

This being the state and condition of the present Earth, one would not imagine by these preparations, 'twas ever intended that it should perish by an universal fire. But such is often the method of Providence, that the exteriour face of things looks one way, and the design lies another; till at length, touching a Spring, as it were, at a certain time, all those affairs change posture and aspect, and shew us which way Provi-

Providence inclines. We must therefore suppose, before the Conflagration begins, there will be dispositions and preparatives suitable to so great a work: and all antiquity, sacred and prophane, does so far concur with us, as to admit and suppose that a great drought will precede, and an extraordinary heat and driness of the Air, to usher in this fiery doom. And these being things which often happen in a course of nature, we cannot disallow such easie preparations, when Providence intends so great a consequence. The Heavens will be shut up, and the Clouds yield no rain; and by this, with an immoderate heat in the Air, the Springs of water will become dry, the Earth chap'd and parch'd, and the Woods and Trees made ready fuel for the fire. We have instances in history that there have been droughts and heats of this nature, to that degree, that the Woods and Forests have taken fire, and the outward Turf and Surface of the Earth, without any other cause than the driness of the Season, and the vehemency of the Sun. And which is more considerable, the Springs and Fountains being dry'd up, the greater Rivers have been sensibly lessen'd, and the lesser quite emptied and exhal'd. These things which happen frequently in particular Countreys and Climates, may at an appointed time, by the disposition of Providence, be more universal throughout the Earth; and have the same effects every where, that we see by experience they have had in certain places. And by this means we may conceive it as feasible to set the whole Earth on fire in some little space of time, as to burn up this or that Countrey after a great drought. But I mean this, with exception still to the main Body of the Sea; which will indeed receive a greater diminution from these causes than we easily imagine, but the final consumption of it will depend upon other reasons, whereof we must give an account in the following Chapters.

As to the Mountains and Rocks, their lofty heads will sink when the Earthquakes begin to roar, at the beginning of the Conflagration: as we shall see hereafter. And as to the Earth it self, 'tis true there are several sorts of earth that are not proper fuel for fire; but

but those Soils that are not so immediately, as clayey Soils, and such like, may by the strength of fire be converted into brick, or stone, or earthen metal, and so melted down and vitrified. For, in conclusion, there is no terrestrial Body that does not finally yield to the force of fire, and may either be converted into flame, incorporated fire, or into a liquor more ardent than either of them. Lastly, as to the polar regions, which you think will be a safe retreat and inaccessible to the fire; 'Tis true, unless Providence hath laid subterraneous treasures of fire there unknown to us, those parts of the Earth will be the last consum'd. But it is to be observ'd, that the cold of those regions proceeds from the length of their Winter, and their distance from the Sun when he is beyond the *Æquator*; and both these causes will be remov'd at the Conflagration. For we suppose the Earth will then return to its primitive situation, which we have explain'd in the 2^d. Book of this Theory; and will have the Sun always in its Equator; whereby the several Climates of the Earth will have a perpetual Equinox, and those under the Poles a perpetual day. And therefore all the excess of cold, and all the consequences of it, will soon be abated. However, the Earth will not be burnt in one day, and those parts of the Earth being uninhabited, there is no inconvenience that they should be more slowly consum'd than the rest.

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This is a general answer to the difficulty propos'd about the possibility of the Conflagration; and being general onely, the parts of it must be more fully explain'd and confirm'd in the sequel of this discourse. We should now proceed directly to the causes of the Conflagration, and show in what manner they do this great execution upon nature. But to be just and impartial in this enquiry, we ought first to separate the spurious and pretended causes from those that are real and genuine; to make no false musters, nor any show of being stronger than we are; and if we can do our work with less force, it will be more to our credit; as a Victory is more honourable that is gain'd with fewer Men.

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There are two grand capital causes which some Authors make use of, as the chief Agents in this work, the *Sun*, and the *Central Fire*. These two great Incendiaries, they say, will be let loose upon us at the Conflagration. The one drawing nearer to the Earth, and the other breaking out of its bowels into these upper regions. These are potent causes indeed, more than enough to destroy this Earth, if it was a thousand times bigger than it is. But for that very reason, I suspect they are not the true causes; for God and Nature do not use to employ unnecessary means to bring about their designs. Disproportion and over-sufficiency is one sort of false measures, and 'tis a sign we do not thoroughly understand our work, when we put more strength to it than the thing requires. Men are forward to call in extraordinary powers, to rid their hands of a troublesome argument, and so make a short dispatch to save themselves the pains of further enquiries: but such methods, as they commonly have no proof, so they give little satisfaction to an inquisitive mind. This supposition of burning the Earth, by the Sun drawing nearer and nearer to it, seems to be made in imitation of the story of *Phaeton*, who driving the Chariot of the Sun with an unsteady hand, came so near the Earth, that he set it on fire. But however we will not reject any pretensions without a fair trial; Let us examine therefore what grounds they can have for either of these suppositions, of the Approximation of the Sun to the Earth, or the Eruption of the Central Fire.

As to the Sun, I desire first to be satisfied in present matter of Fact: whether by any instrument or observation it hath or can be discover'd, that the Sun is nearer to the Earth now, than he was in former ages? or if by any reasoning or comparing calculations such a conclusion can be made? If not, this is but an imaginary cause, and as easily deny'd as propos'd. Astronomers do very little agree in their opinions about the distance of the Sun, *Ptolomy*, *Albategnius*, *Copernicus*, *Tycho*, *Kepler*, and others more modern, differ all in their calculations; but not in such a manner or proportion, as should make us believe that the Sun comes
nearer

nearer to the Earth, but rather goes further from it. For the more modern of them make the distance greater than the more ancient do. *Kepler* says, the distance of the Sun from the Earth lies betwixt 700 and 2000 semidiameters of the Earth: but *Ricciolus* makes it betwixt 700 and 7000. And *Gottfried Wendeline* hath taken 14656. semidiameters, for a middle proportion of the Sun's distance; to which *Kepler* himself came very near in his later years. So that you see how groundless our fears are from the approaches of an enemy, that rather flies from us, if he change posture at all. And we have more reason to believe the report of the modern Astronomers than of the ancient, in this matter; both because the nature of the Heavens and of the celestial Bodies is now better known, and also because they have found out better instruments and better methods to make their observations.

If the Sun and Earth were come nearer to one another, either the circle of the Sun's diurnal arch would be less, and so the day shorter: or the Orbit of the Earth's annual course would be less, and so the Year shorter: Neither of which we have any experience of. And those that suppose us in the centre of the World, need not be afraid till they see *Mercury* and *Venus* in a combustion, for they lie betwixt us and danger; and the Sun cannot come so readily at us with his fiery darts, as at them, who stand in his way. Lastly, this languishing death by the gradual approaches of the Sun, and that irreparable ruine of the Earth which at last must follow from it, do neither of them agree with that Idea of the *Conflagration*, which the Scripture hath given us; for it is to come suddenly and unexpectedly, and take us off like a violent Fever, not as a lingring Consumption. And the Earth is also so to be destroyed by Fire, as not to take away all hopes of a Resurrection or Renovation. For we are assur'd by Scripture that there will be new Heavens and a new Earth after these are burnt up. But if the Sun should come so near us as to make the heavens pass away with a noise, and melt the Elements with fervent heat, and destroy the form and all the works of

of the Earth, what hopes or possibility would there be of a Renovation while the Sun continued in this posture? He would more and more consume and prey upon the Carcass of the Earth, and convert it at length either into an heap of ashes, or a lump of vitrified metal.

So much for the Sun. As to the *Central Fire*, I am very well satisfied it is no imaginary thing. All Antiquity hath preserv'd some sacred Monument of it. The *Vestal* fire of the *Romans*, which was so religiously attended: The *Prytoneia* of the *Greeks* were to the same purpose, and dedicated to *Vesta*: and the *Pyretheia* of the *Persians*, where fire was kept continually by the *Magi*. These all, in my opinion, had the same origine and the same signification. And tho' I do not know any particular observation, that does directly prove or demonstrate that there is such a mass of fire in the middle of the Earth; yet the best accounts we have of the generation of a Planet, do suppose it; and 'tis agreeable to the whole Oeconomy of Nature; as a fire in the heart, which gives life to her motions and productions. But however the question is not at present, about the existence of this fire, but the eruption of it, and the effect of that Eruption: which cannot be, in my judgment, such a *Conflagration* as is describ'd in Scripture.

This Central Fire must be enclos'd in a shell of great strength and firmness; for being of it self the lightest and most active of all Bodies, it would not be detained in that lowest prison without a strong guard upon it. 'Tis true, we can make no certain judgment of what thickness this shell is, but if we suppose this fire to have a twentieth part of the semidiameter of the Earth, on either side the centre, for its sphere, which seems to be a fair allowance; there would still remain nineteen parts, for our safeguard and security. And these nineteen parts of the semidiameter of the Earth will make 3268 miles, for a partition-wall betwixt us and this Central Fire. Who wou'd be afraid of an Enemy lock'd up in so strong a prison? But you'll say, it may be, tho' the Central Fire, at the beginning of the World, might have no more room

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or space than what is mentioned : yet being of that activity that it is, and corrosive nature, it may, in the space of some thousands of years, have eaten deep into the sides of its prison; and so come nearer to the surface of the Earth, by some hundreds or thousands of miles than it was at first. This would be a material exception if it could be made out. But what Phenomenon is there in Nature that proves this? How does it appear by any observation that the Central Fire gains ground upon us? Or is increased in quantity, or come nearer to the surface of the Earth? I know nothing that can be offered in proof of this: and if there be no appearance of a change, nor any sensible effect of it, 'tis an argument there is none, or none considerable. If the quantity of that fire was considerably increas'd, it must needs, besides other effects, have made the Body of the Earth considerably lighter. The Earth having, by this conversion of its own substance into fire, lost so much of its heaviest matter, and got so much of the lightest and most active Element in stead of it: and in both these respects its gravity would be manifestly lessen'd. Which if it really was, in any considerable degree, it would discover it self by some change, either as to the motion of the Earth, or as to its place or station in the Heavens. But there being no external change observable, in this or any other respect, 'tis reasonable to presume that there is no considerable inward change, or no great consumption of its inward parts and substance: and consequently no great increase of the Central Fire.

But if we should admit both an encrease and eruption of this fire, it would not have that effect which is pretended. It might cause some confusion and disorder in those parts of the Earth where it broke out, but it would not make an universal Conflagration, such as is represented to us in Scripture. Let us suppose the Earth to be open or burst in any place, under the Pole, for instance, or under the Æquator: and let it gape as low as the Central Fire. At this chasm or rupture we suppose the fire wou'd gush out; and what then would be the consequence of this when

when it came to the surface of the Earth? It would either be dissipated and lost in the air, or fly still higher towards the Heavens in a mass of flame. But what execution in the mean time would it do upon the Body of the Earth? 'Tis but like a flash of lightning, or a flame issuing out of a pit, that dies presently. Besides, this Central Fire is of that subtilty and tenuity that it is not able to inflame gross Bodies: no more than those Meteors we call *Lambent Fires*, inflame the bodies to which they stick. Lastly, in explaining the manner of the Conflagration, we must have regard principally to Scripture; for the explanations given there are more to the purpose, than all that the Philosophers have said upon that subject. Now, as we noted before, 'tis manifest in Scripture that after the Conflagration there will be a *Restoration*, *New Heavens* and a *New Earth*. 'Tis the express doctrine of S. Peter, besides other Prophets: We must therefore suppose the Earth reduc'd to such a Chaos by this last fire, as will lay the foundation of a new World. Which can never be, if the inward frame of it be broke, the Central Fire exhausted, and the exterior region suck'd into those central vacuities. This must needs make it lose its former poise and libration, and it will thereupon be thrown into some other part of the Universe, as the useless shell of a broken Granado, or as a dead carcass and unprofitable matter.

2 Pet. 3.
12, 13.

These reasons may be sufficient why we should not depend upon those pretended causes of the Conflagration, The Suns advance towards the Earth, or such a rupture of the Earth as will let out the Central Fire. These Causes, I hope, will appear superfluous, when we shall have given an account of the Conflagration without them. But young Philosophers, like young Soldiers, think they are never sufficiently armed; and often take more weapons, than they can make use of, when they come to fight. Not that we altogether reject the influence of the Sun, or of the Central Fire; especially the latter. For in that great estuation of Nature, the Body of the Earth will be much open'd and relaxated; and when the pores are

enlarg'd, the steams of that fire will sweat out more plentifully into all its parts; but still without any rupture in the vessels or in the skin. And whereas these Authors suppose the very Veins burst, and the vital blood to gush out, as at open flood-gates, we onely allow a more copious perspiration, and think that sufficient for all purposes in this case.

CH A P. VII.

The true bounds of the Last Fire, and how far it is fatal. The natural Causes and Materials of it, cast into three ranks: First, such as are exteriour and visible upon the Earth; where the Volcano's of the Earth, and their effects, are consider'd. Secondly, such materials as are within the Earth. Thirdly, such as are in the Air.

AS we have, in the preceding Chapter, laid aside those Causes of the Conflagration, which we thought too great and cumbersome; so now we must, in like manner, examine the Effect, and reduce that to its just measures and proportions; that there may be nothing left superfluous on either side: Then, by comparing the real powers with the work they are to do, both being stated within their due bounds, we may the better judge how they are proportion'd to one another.

We noted before, that the Conflagration had nothing to do with the Stars and superiour Heavens, but was wholly confin'd to this Sublunary World. And this Deluge of Fire will have much what the same bounds, that the Deluge of Water had formerly. This is according to St. Peter's doctrine, for he makes the same parts of the Universe to be the subject of both: namely, the inferiour Heavens and the Earth. *The*
2 Pet. 3. 5, 6. *Heavens and the Earth which were then, perish'd in a Deluge*

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Deluge of Water: But the Heavens and the Earth that are now, are reserv'd to fire. The present Heavens and Earth are substituted in the place of those that perish'd at the Deluge, and these are to be over-run and destroy'd by fire, as those were by water. So that the Apostle takes the same Regions, and the same space and compass for the one as for the other, and makes their fate different according to their different constitution, and the different order of Providence. This is the sense St. Austin gives us of the Apostle's words, and these are the bounds he sets to the last Fire; whereof a modern Commentator is so well assur'd, that he says, *Estius in loc.* *They neither understand Divinity, nor Philosophy, that would make the Conflagration reach above the Elementary Heavens.*

Let these be then its limits upwards, the Clouds, Air, and Atmosphere of the Earth. But the question seems more doubtful, *How* far it will extend downwards, into the bowels of the Earth. I answer still, to the same depth that the Waters of the Deluge reach'd: To the lowest Abysses and the deepest Caverns within the ground. And seeing no Caverns are deeper or lower, at least according to our Theory, than the bottom of the great Ocean, to that depth, I suppose, the rage of this fire will penetrate, and devour all before it. And therefore we must not imagine, that onely the outward turf and habitable surface of the Earth will be put into a flame and laid wast; the whole exterior region of the Earth, to the depth of the deepest part of the Sea, will suffer in this fire; and suffer to that degree, as to be melted down, and the frame of it dissolv'd. For we are not to conceive that the Earth will be onely scorcht or charkt in the last fire, there will be a sort of liquefaction and dissolution; It will become a *molten Sea mingled with fire*, *Rev. 15. 2.* according to the expression of Scripture. And this dissolution may reasonably be suppos'd to reach as low as the Earth hath any hollowneses, or can give vent to smoak and flame. *2 Pet. 3. 10.* *Psal. 97. 5.*

Wherefore taking these for the bounds and limits of the last great fire, the next thing to be enquir'd into, are the *Natural Causes* of it. How this strange fate

fate will seize upon the Sublunary World, and with an irresistible fury subdue all things to it self. But when I say *Natural Causes*, I would not be so understood, as if I thought the Conflagration was a pure *Natural Fatality*, as the *Stoicks* seem to do. No, 'tis a *mixt Fatality*; The Causes indeed are natural, but the administration of them is from an higher hand. Fire is the Instrument, or the executive power, and hath no more force given it, than what it hath naturally; but the concurrence of these causes, or of these fiery powers, at such a time, and in such a manner, and the conduct of them to carry on and compleat the whole work without cessation or interruption, that I look upon as more than what material Nature could effect of it self, or than could be brought to pass by such a government of matter, as is the bare result of its own laws and determinations. When a Ship sails gently before the wind, the Mariners may stand idle; but to guide her in a storm, all hands must be at work. There are rules and measures to be observ'd, even in these tumults and desolations of Nature, in destroying a World, as well as in making one, and therefore in both it is reasonable to suppose a more than ordinary Providence to superintend the work. Let us not therefore be too positive or presumptuous in our conjectures about these things, for if there be an invisible hand, Divine or Angelical, that touches the Springs and Wheels; it will not be easie for us to determine, with certainty, the order of their motions. However, 'tis our duty to search into the ways and works of God, as far as we can: And we may without offence look into the Magazines of Nature, see what provisions are made, and what preparations for this great Day; and in what method 'tis most likely the design will be executed.

But before we proceed to mark out Materials for this fire, give me leave to observe one condition or property in the Form of this present Earth, that makes it capable of inflammation. 'Tis the manner of its construction, in an hollow cavernous form; By reason whereof, containing much Air in its cavities, and having many inlets and outlets, 'tis in most places
capable

capable of ventilation, pervious and passable to the winds, and consequently to the fire. Those that have read the former part of this Theory, know how the Earth came into this hollow and broken form, from what causes and at what time; namely, at the Universal Deluge; when there was a disruption of the exterior Earth that fell into the Abyss, and so, for a time, was overflow'd with water. These Ruines recover'd from the water, we inhabit, and these Ruines onely will be burnt up; For being not onely unequal in their Surface, but also hollow, loose, and incompact within, as ruines use to be, they are made thereby capable of a second fate, by inflammation. *Thereby*, I say, they are made combustible; for if the exterior Regions of this Earth were as close and compact in all their parts, as we have reason to believe the interior Regions of it to be, the Fire could have little power over it, nor ever reduce it to such a state as is requir'd in a compleat Conflagration, such as ours is to be.

This being admitted, that the Exterior region of the Earth stands hollow, as a well set fire, to receive Air freely into its parts, and hath issues for smoke and flame: It remains to enquire what fewel or materials Nature hath fitted to kindle this Pile, and to continue it on fire till it be consum'd; or, in plain words, What are the *natural causes and preparatives for a Conflagration*. The first and most obvious preparations that we see in nature for this effect, are the *Burning Mountains* or *Volcano's* of the Earth. These are lesser Essays or preludes to the general fire; set on purpose by Providence to keep us awake, and to mind us continually, and forewarn us of what we are to expect at last. The Earth you see is already kindled, blow but the Coal, and propagate the fire, and the work will go on. *Tophet is prepar'd of old*, and when the Day of Doom is come, and the Date of the World expir'd, *the breath of the Lord shall make it burn*. *Isa. 30. 33.*

But besides these Burning Mountains, there are Lakes of pitch and brimstone and oily Liquors disperst in several parts of the Earth. These are to enrage the fire as it goes, and to fortifie it against any resistance
or

or opposition. Then all the vegetable productions upon the Surface of the Earth, as Trees, shrubs, grass, corn, and such like; Every thing that grows out of the ground, is fuel for the fire; And tho' they are now accommodated to our use and service, they will then turn all against us; and with a mighty blaze, and rapid course, make a devastation of the outward furniture of the Earth, whether natural or artificial. But these things deserve some further consideration, especially that strange Phenomenon of the *Volcano's* or *Burning Mountains*, which we will now consider more particularly.

There is nothing certainly more terrible in all Nature than Fiery Mountains, to those that live within the view or noise of them; but it is not easy for us, who never see them nor heard them, to represent them to our selves with such just and lively imaginations as shall excite in us the same passions, and the same horror as they would excite, if present to our senses. The time of their eruption and of their raging, is, of all others, the most dreadful; but, many times, before their eruption, the symptoms of an approaching fit are very frightful to the People. The Mountain begins to roar and bellow in its hollow caverns; cries out, as it were, in pain to be deliver'd of some burthen, too heavy to be born, and too big to be easily discharg'd. The Earth shakes and trembles, in apprehension of the pangs and convulsions that are coming upon her; And the Sun often hides his head, or appears with a discolour'd face, pale, or dusky, or bloody, as if all Nature was to suffer in this Agony. After these forerunners or symptoms of an eruption, the wide jaws of the Mountain open: And first, clouds of smoke issue out, then flames of fire, and after that a mixture of all sorts of burning matter; red hot stones, lumps of metal, half-dissolv'd minerals, with coals and fiery ashes. These fall in thick showres round about the Mountain, and in all adjacent parts; and not onely so, but are carried, partly by the force of the expulsion, and partly by the winds, when they are aloft in the Air, into far distant Countries. As from *Italy* to *Constantinople*, and cross the *Mediterranean Sea*

Sea into *Africk*; as the best Historians, *Procopius*, *Am-
mianus Marcellinus*, and *Dion Cassius*, have attested.

These Volcano's are planted in several regions of the Earth, and in both Continents, This of ours, and the other of *America*. For by report of those that have view'd that new-found World, there are many Mountains in it that belch out Smoke and Fire; some constantly, and others by fits and intervals. In our Continent Providence hath variously disperst them, without any rule known to us; but they are generally in Islands, or near the Sea. In the Asiatick Oriental Islands they are in great abundance, and Historians tell us of a Mountain in the Island *Java*, that in the year, 1586. at one eruption kill'd ten thousand people in the neighbouring Cities and Countrey. But we do not know so well the History of those remote Volcano's, as of such as are in Europe and nearer home. In *Iseland*, tho' it lye within the Polar circle, and is scarce habitable by reason of the extremity of cold, and abundance of Ice and Snow, yet there are three burning Mountains in that Island; whereof the chief and most remarkable is *Hecla*. This hath its head always cover'd with Snow, and its belly always fill'd with Fire; and these are both so strong in their kind, and equally powerful, that they cannot destroy one another. It is said to cast out, when it rages, besides earth, stones and ashes, a sort of flaming water. As if all contrarieties were to meet in this Mountain to make it the more perfect resemblance of Hell, as the credulous inhabitants fancy it to be.

But there are no Volcano's in my opinion, that deserve our observation so much, as those that are in and about the *Mediterranean Sea*; There is a knot of them called the *Vulcanian Islands*, from their fiery eruptions, as if they were the Forges of *Vulcan*; as *Stombolo*, *Lipara*, and others, which are not so remarkable now as they have been formerly. However, without dispute, there are none in the Christian World to be compared with *Ætna* and *Vesuvius*; one in the Island of *Sicily*, and the other in *Campania*, overlooking the Port and City of *Naples*. These two, from all memory of man and the most ancient re-
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cords of History, have been fam'd for their Treasures of subterraneous Fires: which are not yet exhausted, nor diminish'd, so far as is perceivable; for they rage still, upon occasions, with as much fierceness and violence, as they ever did in former Ages; as if they had a continual supply to answer their expences, and were to stand till the last fire, as a type and prefiguration of it, throughout all generations.

Let us therefore take these two Volcano's as a pattern for the rest; seeing they are well known, and stand in the heart of the Christian World, where, 'tis likely, the last fire will make its first assault. *Ætna*, of the two, is more spoken of by the ancients, both Poets and Historians; and we should scarce give credit to their relations concerning it, if some later eruptions did not equal or exceed the fame of all that hath been reported from former ages. That it heated the waters of the Sea, and cover'd them over with ashes; crack'd or dissolv'd the neighbouring Rocks; darkened the Sun and the Air; and cast out, not only mighty streams of flame, but a flood of melted Ore and other materials; These things we can now believe, having had experience of greater, or an account of them from such as have been eyewitnesses of these fires, or of the fresh ruines and sad effects of them.

There are two things especially, in these Eruptions of *Ætna*, that are most prodigious in themselves and most remarkable for our purpose. The Rivers of fiery matter that break out of its bowels, or are spew'd out of its mouth; and the vast burning stones which it flings into the Air, at a strange height and distance. As to these fiery rivers or torrents, and the matter whereof they are compounded, we have a full account of them by *Alphonfus Borellus*, a learned Mathematician at *Pisa*; who, after the last great Eruption in the year 1669. went into *Sicily*, while the fact was fresh, to view and survey what *Ætna* had done or suffer'd. And he says the quantity of matter thrown out of the Mountain at that time, upon survey amounted to Ninety three millions, eight hundred

dred thirty eight thousand, seven hundred and fifty cubical paces. So that if it had been extended in length upon the surface of the Earth, at the breadth and depth of 3 foot, it would have reacht further than ninety three millions of paces; which is more than four times the Circuit of the whole Earth, taking a thousand paces to a mile. This is strange to our imagination and almost incredible, that one Mountain should throw out so much fiery matter, besides all the ashes that were disperst through the Air, far and near, and could be brought to no account.

'Tis true, all this matter was not actually inflam'd or liquid fire. But the rest that was sand, stone and gravel, might have run into glass or some melted liquor like to it, if it had not been thrown out before the heat fully reacht it. However, sixty million paces of this matter, as the same Author computes, were liquid fire, or came out of the mouth of the pit in that form. This made a River of fire, sometimes two miles broad, according to his computation; but according to the observation of others who also viewed it, the Torrent of fire was six or seven miles broad, and sometimes ten or fifteen fathoms deep; and forc'd its way into the Sea near a mile, preserving it self alive in the midst of the waters.

This is beyond all the infernal Lakes and Rivers, *Acheron*, *Phlegeton*, *Cocytus*, all that the Poets have talkt of. Their greatest fictions about Hell have not come up to the reality of one of our burning Mountains upon Earth. Imagin then all our *Volcano's* raging at once in this manner.----- But I will not pursue that supposition yet; Give me leave only to add here what I mentioned in the second place, The vast *Burning Stones* which this Mountain, in the time of its rage and estuation, threw into the Air with an incredible force. This same Author tells us of a stone fifteen foot long, that was slung out of the mouth of the pit, to a miles distance. And when it fell, it came from such an height and with such a violence, that it buried it self in the ground eight foot deep. What trifles are our Mortar-pieces and Bombes, when compar'd with these Engines of Nature? When she

flings out of the wide throat of a Volcano, a broken Rock, and twirles it in the air like a little bullet; then lets it fall to do execution here below, as Providence shall point and direct it. It would be hard to give an account how so great an impulse can be given to a Body so ponderous, But there's no disputing against matter of fact; and as the thoughts of God are not like our thoughts, so neither are his works like our works.

lib. 66. Thus much for *Ætna*. Let us now give an instance in *Vesuvius*, another Burning Mountain upon the coast of the Mediterranean, which hath as frequent Eruptions, and some as terrible as those of *Ætna*. *Dion Cassius* (one of the best writers of the Roman History) hath given us an account of one that happened in the time of *Titus Vespasian*; and tho' he hath not set down particulars, as the former Author did, of the quantity of fiery matter thrown out at that time: yet supposing that proportionable to its fierceness in other respects, this seems to me as dreadful an Eruption as any we read of; and was accompanied with such prodigies and commotions in the Heavens and the Earth, as made it look like the beginning of the last Conflagration. As a prelude to this Tragedy, He says there were strange sights in the air, and after that followed an extraordinary drought, *Then the Earth began to tremble and quake, and the Concussions were so great that the ground seem'd to rise and boyl up in some places, and in others the tops of the mountains sunk in or tumbled down. At the same time were great noises and sounds heard, some were subterraneous, like thunder within the Earth; others above ground, like groans or bellowings. The Sea roar'd, The heavens rattled with a fearful noise, and then came a sudden and mighty crack, as if the frame of Nature had broke, or all the mountains of the Earth had faln down at once. At length Vesuvius burst, and threw out of its womb, first, huge stones, then a vast quantity of fire and smoke, so as the air was all darkned, and the Sun was hid, as if he had been under a great Eclipse. The day was turn'd into night, and light into darkness; and the frighted people thought the Gyants were making war against heaven, and fanstied they see the*
shapes

shapes and images of Gyants in the smoak, and heard the sound of their trumpets. Others thought the World was returning to its first Chaos, or going to be all consum'd with fire. In this general confusion and consternation they knew not where to be safe, some run out of the fields into the houses, others out of the houses into the fields; Those that were at Sea hasten'd to Land, and those that were at Land endeavour'd to get to Sea; still thinking every place safer than that where they were. Besides grosser lumps of matter, there was thrown out of the Mountain such a prodigious quantity of ashes, as cover'd the Land and Sea, and fill'd the Air, so as, besides other damages, the Birds, Beasts, and Fishes, with Men, Women and Children, were destroy'd, within such a compass; and two entire Cities, Herculanium and Pompeios, were overwhelm'd with a showre of ashes, as the People were sitting in the Theater. Nay, these ashes were carried by the winds over the Mediterranean into Africk, and into Ægypt and Syria. And at Rome they choak'd the Air on a sudden, so as to hide the face of the Sun. Whereupon the People, not knowing the cause, as not having yet got the News from Campania of the Eruption of Vesuvius, could not imagine what the reason should be; but thought the Heavens and the Earth were coming together, The Sun coming down, and the Earth going to take its place above. Thus far the Historian.

You see what disorders in nature, and what an alarm, the Eruption of one fiery Mountain is capable to make; These things, no doubt, would have made strong impressions upon us, if we had been eye-witnesses of them; But I know, representations made from dead history, and at a distance, though the testimony be never so credible, have a much less effect upon us than what we see our selves, and what our senses immediately inform us of. I have onely given you an account of two Volcano's, and of a single Eruption in either of them; These Mountains are not very far distant from one another: Let us suppose two such Eruptions, as I have mention'd, to happen at the same time, and both these Mountains to be raging at once, in this manner; By that violence you have seen in each of them singly, you will easily imagine what a terrour and desolation they would carry round about,

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by a conjunction of their fury and all their effects, in the Air and on the Earth. Then, if to these two, you should joyn two more, the Sphere of their activity would still be enlarg'd, and the Scenes become more dreadful. But, to compleat the supposition, Let us imagine all the Volcano's of the whole Earth, to be prepar'd and set to a certain time; which time being come, and a signal given by Providence, all these Mines begin to play at once; I mean, All these Fiery Mountains burst out, and discharge themselves in flames of fire, tear up the roots of the Earth, throw hot burning stones, send out streams of flowing Metals and Minerals, and all other sorts of ardent matter, which Nature hath lodg'd in those Treasuries. If all these Engines, I say, were to play at once, the Heavens and the Earth would seem to be in a flame, and the World in an universal combustion. But we may reasonably presume, that against that great Day of vengeance and execution, not onely all these will be employ'd, but also new Volcano's will be open'd, and new Mountains in every Region will break out into smoke and flame; just as at the Deluge, the Abyss broke out from the Womb of the Earth, and from those hidden stores sent an immense quantity of water, which, it may be, the Inhabitants of that World never thought of before. So we must expect new Eruptions, and also new sulphureous Lakes and Fountains of Oyl, to boyl out of the ground; And these all united with that Fewel that naturally grows upon the Surface of the Earth, will be sufficient to give the first onset, and to lay waist all the habitable World, and the Furniture of it.

But we suppose the Conflagration will go lower, pierce under-ground, and dissolve the substance of the Earth to some considerable depth; therefore besides these outward and visible preparations, we must consider all the hidden invisible Materials within the Veins of the Earth; Such are all Minerals or Mineral juices and concretions that are igniferous, or capable of inflammation; And these cannot easily be reckon'd up or estimated. Some of the most common are, Sulphur, and all sulphureous bodies, and Earths impreg-

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impregnated with Sulphur, Bitumen and bituminous concretions; inflammable Salts, Coal and other fossiles that are ardent, with innumerable mixtures and compositions of these kinds, which being open'd by heat, are unctuous and inflammable; or by attrition discover the latent seeds of fire. But besides consistent Bodies, there is also much volatile fire within the Earth, in fumes, steams, and exudations, which will all contribute to this effect. From these stores under-ground all Plants and Vegetables are fed and supply'd, as to their oily and sulphureous parts; And all hot Waters in Baths or Fountains, must have their original from some of these, some mixture or participation of them. And as to the *Brittish* Soyl, there is so much Coal incorporated with it, that when the Earth shall burn, we have reason to apprehend no small danger from that subterraneous Enemy.

These dispositions, and this Fewel we find, in and upon the Earth, towards the last Fire. The third sort of Provision is in the Air; All fiery Meteors and Exhalations engender'd and form'd in those Regions above, and discharg'd upon the Earth in several ways. I believe there were no fiery Meteors in the ante-diluvian Heavens; which therefore *St. Peter* says, were constituted of water; had nothing in them but what was watery. But he says, *the Heavens that are now* have treasures of fire, or are reserv'd for fire, as things laid up in a store-house for that purpose. We have thunder and lightning, and fiery tempests, and there is nothing more vehement, impetuous, and irresistible, where their force is directed. It seems to me very remarkable, that the Holy Writers describe the coming of the Lord, and the destruction of the wicked, in the nature of a tempest, or a storm of fire. Upon the wicked the Lord shall rain coals, fire and brimstone, and a burning tempest, this shall be the portion of their cup. *Psalm. 11. 6.* And in the lofty Song of David (*Psalm. 18.*) which, in my judgment, respects both the past Deluge and the future Conflagration, 'tis said, *The Lord also thundred in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice, hail-stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent forth his arrows and scattered them, and he shot out lightnings and discomfited them. Then the*
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Channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the World were discover'd; at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. And a like fiery coming is describ'd in the ninety seventh Psalm, as also by
Isaiah, Daniel, and S. Paul. And lastly, in the Apo-
calypse, when the World draws to a conclusion, as in
the seventh Trumpet (ch. 11. 19.) and the seventh
Vial (ch. 16. 18.) we have still mention made of this
Fiery Tempest of Lightnings and Thunderings.

Isa. 66. 15.
Dan. 7. 9, 10.
2 Thess. 1. 8.

We may therefore reasonably suppose, that, before the Conflagration, the air will be furcharg'd every where, (by a precedent drought) with hot and fiery exhalations; And as against the Deluge, those regions were burthened with water and moist vapours, which were pour'd upon the Earth, not in gentle showres, but like rivers and cataracts from Heaven; so they will now be fill'd with hot fumes and sulphureous clouds, which will sometimes flow in streams and fiery impressions through the Air, sometimes make Thunder and Lightnings, and sometimes fall down upon the Earth in floods of Fire. In general, there is a great analogy to be observed betwixt the two Deluges, of Water and of Fire; not only as to the bounds of them, which were noted before; but as to the general causes and sources upon which they depend, from above and from below. At the Flood, the windows of Heaven were opened above, and the Abyss was opened below; and the Waters of these two joyn'd together to overflow the World. In like manner, at the Conflagration, God will rain down Fire from Heaven, as he did once upon *Sodom*; and at the same time the subterraneous store-houses of Fire will be broken open, which answers to the disruption of the Abyss: And these two meeting and mingling together, will involve all the Heaven and Earth in flames.

This is a short account of the ordinary stores of Nature, and the ordinary preparations for a general Fire; And in contemplation of these, *Pliny the Naturalist*, said boldly, *It was one of the greatest wonders of the World, that the World was not every day set on fire.* We will conclude this Chapter with his words, in the

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the second Book of his *Natural History*; having given an account of some fiery Mountains, and other parts of the Earth that are the seats and sources of Fire; He makes this reflection; *Seeing this Element is so fruitful that it brings forth it self, and multiplies and encreases from the least sparks, what are we to expect from so many fires already kindled on the Earth? How does nature feed and satisfy so devouring an Element, and such a great voracity throughout all the World, without loss or diminution of her self? Add to these fires we have mentioned, the Stars and the Great Sun, then all the fires made for humane uses; fire in stones, in wood, in the clouds and in thunder; IT EXCEEDS ALL MIRACLES, IN MY OPINION, THAT ONE DAY SHOULD PASS WITHOUT SETTING THE WORLD ALL ON FIRE.*

C H A P. VIII.

Some new dispositions towards the Conflagration, as to the matter, form, and situation of the Earth. Concerning miraculous Causes, and how far the ministry of Angels may be engaged in this Work.

WE have given an account, in the preceding Chapter, of the ordinary preparations of Nature for a general fire; We now are to give an account of the extraordinary, or of any new dispositions, which towards the end of the World, may be superadded to the ordinary state of Nature. I do not, by these, mean things openly miraculous and supernatural, but such a change wrought in Nature as shall still have the face of Natural Causes, and yet have a greater tendency to the Conflagration. As for example, suppose a great Drought, as we noted before, to precede this fate, or a general heat and

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dryness

dryness of the air and of the Earth; because this happens sometimes in a course of Nature, it will not be lookt upon as prodigious. 'Tis true, some of the Ancients speak of a Drought of Forty Years, that will be a forerunner of the Conflagration, so that there will not be a watery Cloud, nor a Rainbow seen in the Heavens, for so long time. And this they impute to *Elias*, who, at his coming, will stop the Rain and shut up the Heavens, to make way for the last Fire. But these are excessive and ill-grounded suppositions, for half forty years drought will bring an universal sterility upon the Earth, and thereupon an universal Famine, with innumerable diseases; so that all mankind would be destroyed before the Conflagration could overtake them.

But we will readily admit an extraordinary drought and desiccation of all bodies to usher in this great fatality. And therefore whatsoever we read in Natural History concerning former droughts, of their drying up fountains and rivers, parching the Earth and making the outward Turf take fire in several places; filling the air with fiery impressions, making the Woods and Forests ready fuel, and sometimes to kindle by the heat of the Sun or a flash of Lightning: These and what other effects have come to pass in former droughts, may come to pass again; and that in an higher measure, and so as to be of more general extent. And we must also allow, that by this means, a great degree of inflammability, or easiness to be set on Fire, will be superinduc'd, both into the body of the Earth, and of all things that grow upon it. The heat of the Sun will pierce deeper into its bowels, when it gapes to receive his beams, and by chinks and widened pores makes way for their passage to its very heart. And, on the other hand, it is not improbable, but that upon this general relaxation and incalescency of the Body of the Earth, the *Central Fire* may have a freer efflux, and diffuse it self in greater abundance every way; so as to affect even these exterior regions of the Earth, so far, as to make them still more catching and more combustible.

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From this external and internal heat acting upon the Body of the Earth, all Minerals that have the seeds of fire in them, will be open'd, and exhale their effluvia more copiously : As Spices, when warm'd, are more odoriferous, and fill the Air with their perfumes ; so the particles of fire, that are shut up in several bodies, will easily flie abroad, when by a further degree of relaxation you shake off their chains, and open the Prison-doors. We cannot doubt, but there are many sorts of Minerals, and many sorts of Fire-stones, and of Trees and Vegetables of this nature, which will sweat out their oily and sulphureous atomes, when by a general heat and driness their parts are loosen'd and agitated.

We have no experience that will reach so far, as to give us a full account what the state of Nature will be at that time ; I mean, after this drought, towards the end of the world ; But we may help our imagination, by comparing it with other seasons and temperaments of the Air. As therefore in the Spring the Earth is fragrant, and the Fields and Gardens are fill'd with the sweet breathings of Herbs and Flowers ; especially after a gentle rain, when their Bodies are soften'd, and the warmth of the Sun makes them evaporate more freely ; So a greater degree of heat acting upon all the bodies of the Earth, like a stronger fire in the Alembick, will extract another sort of parts or particles, more deeply incorporated and more difficult to be disintangled ; I mean oily parts, and such undiscover'd parcels of fire, as lie fix'd and imprison'd in hard bodies. These, I imagine, will be in a great measure set a-float, or drawn out into the Air, which will abound with hot and dry Exhalations, more than with vapours and moisture in a wet season ; and by this means, all Elements and elementary Bodies will stand ready, and in a proximate disposition to be inflam'd.

Thus much concerning the last drought, and the general effects of it. In the next place, we must consider the Earth-quakes that will precede the Conflagration, and the consequences of them. I noted before, that the cavernous and broken construction of

the present Earth, was that which made it obnoxious to be destroy'd by fire; as its former construction over the Abyss, made it obnoxious to be destroy'd with Water. This hollowness of the Earth is most sensible in mountainous and hilly Countreys, which therefore I look upon as most subject to burning; but the plain Countreys may also be made hollow and hilly by Earth-quakes; when the vapours not finding an easie vent, raise the ground and make a forcible eruption, as at the springing of a Mine. And tho' plain Countreys are not so subject to Earth-quakes as mountainous, because they have not so many cavities and subterraneous vaults to lodge the vapours in; yet every Region hath more or less of them: And after this drought, the vacuities of the Earth being every where enlarg'd, the quantity of exhalations much increas'd, and the motion of them more strong and violent, they will have their effects in many places where they never had any before. Yet I do not suppose that this will raise new ridges of Mountains, like the *Alpes* or *Pyreneans*, in those Countreys that are now plain, but that they will break and loosen the ground, make greater inequalities in the surface, and greater cavities within, than what are at present in those places; And by this means, the fire will creep under them, and find a passage thorough them, with more ease, than if they were compact, and every where continued and unbroken.

But you will say, it may be, how does it appear, that there will be more frequent Earth-quakes towards the end of the World? If this precedent drought be admitted, 'tis plain that fiery exhalations will abound every where within the Earth, and will have a greater agitation than ordinary; and these being the causes of Earth-quakes, when they are rarified or inflam'd, 'tis reasonable to suppose that in such a state of nature, they will more frequently happen, than at other times. Besides, Earth-quakes are taken notice of in Scripture, as signs and forerunners of the last day, as they usually are of all great changes and calamities. The destruction of *Jerusalem* was a type of the destruction of the World, and the Evangelists always mention

tion Earth-quakes amongst the ominous Prodigies that were to attend it. But these Earth-quakes we are speaking of at present, are but the beginnings of sorrow, and not to be compar'd with those that will follow afterwards, when Nature is convuls'd in her last agony, just as the flames are seizing on her. Of which we shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

These changes will happen as to the *matter* and *form* of the Earth, before it is attack't by the last fire; There will be also another change as to the *situation* of it; for that will be rectified, and the Earth restor'd to the posture it had at first, namely, of a right aspect and conversion to the Sun. But because I cannot determine at what time this restitution will be, whether at the beginning, middle, or end of the Conflagration, I will not presume to lay any stress upon it. *Plato* seems to have imputed the Conflagration to this only; which is so far true, that the Revolution call'd *The Great Year*, is this very Revolution, or the Return of the Earth and the Heavens to their first posture. But tho' this may be contemporary with the last fire, or some way concomitant; yet it does not follow that it is the cause of it, much less the onely cause. It may be an occasion of making the fire reach more easily towards the Poles, when by this change of situation, their long Nights and long Winters shall be taken away.

These new dispositions in our Earth which we expect before that great day, may be look'd upon as extraordinary, but not as miraculous, because they may proceed from natural causes. But now in the last place, we are to consider *miraculous causes*: What influence they may have, or what part they may bear, in this great revolution of nature. By *miraculous causes* we understand either God's immediate omnipotency, or the Ministry of Angels; And what may be perform'd by the latter, is very improperly and undecently thrown upon the former. 'Tis a great step to Omnipotency: and 'tis hard to define what miracles, on this side Creation, require an infinite power. We are sure that the Angels are ministring Spirits, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand about the Throne
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of the Almighty, to receive his commands and execute his judgments. That perfect knowledge they have of the powers of nature, and of conducting those powers to the best advantage, by adjusting causes in a fit subordination one to another, makes them capable of performing, not onely things far above our force, but even above our imagination. Besides, they have a radical inherent power, belonging to the excellency of their nature, of determining the motions of matter, within a far greater sphere than humane Souls can pretend to. We can onely command our spirits, and determine their motions within the compass of our own Bodies; but their activity and empire is of far greater extent, and the outward World is much more subject to their dominion than to ours. From these considerations it is reasonable to conclude, that the generality of miracles may be and are perform'd by Angels; It being less decorous to employ a Sovereign power, where a subaltern is sufficient, and when we hastily cast things upon God, for quick dispatch, we consult our own ease more than the honour of our Maker.

I take it for granted here, that what is done by an Angelical hand, is truly providential, and of divine administration; and also justly bears the character of a miracle. Whatsoever may be done by pure material causes, or humane strength, we account Natural; and whatsoever is above these we call supernatural and miraculous. Now what is supernatural and miraculous is either the effect of an Angelical power, or of a Sovereign and Infinite power. And we ought not to confound these two, no more than Natural and Supernatural; for there is a greater difference betwixt the highest Angelical power and Omnipotency, than betwixt an Humane power and Angelical. Therefore as the first Rule concerning miracles is this, That we must not flie to miracles, where Man and Nature are sufficient; so the second Rule is this, that we must not flie to a sovereign infinite power, where an Angelical is sufficient. And the reason in both Rules is the same, namely, because it argues a defect of Wisdom in all Oeconomies to employ more and greater means than are sufficient.

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Now to make application of this to our present purpose, I think it reasonable, and also sufficient, to admit the ministry of Angels in the future Conflagration of the World. If Nature will not lay violent hands upon her self, or is not sufficient to work her own destruction, Let us allow *Destroying Angels* to interest themselves in the work, as the Executioners of the Divine Justice and Vengeance upon a degenerate World. We have examples of this so frequently in Sacred History, how the Angels have executed God's Judgments upon a Nation or a People, that it cannot seem new or strange, that in this last judgment, which by all the Prophets is represented as the *Great Day of the Lord*, the day of his Wrath and of his Fury, the same Angels should bear their parts, and conclude the last scene of that Tragedy which they had acted in all along. We read of the *Destroying Angel* in *Ægypt*; of Angels that presided at the destruction of *Sodom*, which was a Type of the future destruction of the World, (*Jude 7.*) and of Angels that will accompany our Saviour when he comes in flames of Fire: Not, we suppose, to be Spectators only, but Actors and Superintendents in this great Catastrophe.

This ministry of Angels may be either in ordering and conducting such Natural Causes as we have already given an account of, or in adding new ones, if occasion be; I mean, encreasing the quantity of Fire, or of fiery materials, in and about the Earth. So as that Element shall be more abundant and more predominant, and overbear all opposition that either Water, or any other Body, can make against it. It is not material whether of these two Suppositions we follow, provided we allow that the Conflagration is a work of Providence, and not a pure Natural Fatality. If it be necessary that there should be an augmentation made of Fiery Matter, 'tis not hard to conceive how that may be done, either from the Heavens or from the Earth. The Prophets sometimes speak of multiplying or strengthening the Light of the Sun, and it may as easily be conceiv'd of his heat as of his light; as if the Vial that was to be pour'd

Rev. 26. 8.

pour'd upon it, and gave it a power to scorch men with fire, had something of a Natural sence as well as Moral. But there is another stream of Ethereal matter that flows from the Heavens, and recruits the *Central Fire* with continual supplies; This may be encreas'd and strengthened, and its effects convey'd throughout the whole Body of the Earth.

But if an augmentation is to be made of Terrestrial Fire, or of such terrestrial principles as contain it most, as Sulphur, Oyl, and such like, I am apt to believe, these will encrease of their own accord, upon a general drought and desiccation of the Earth. For I am far from the opinion of some Chymists, that think these principles immutable, and incapable of diminution or augmentation. I willingly admit that all such particles may be broken and disfigur'd, and thereby lose their proper and specifick virtue, and new ones may be generated to supply the places of the former. Which supplies, or new productions being made in a less or greater measure, according to the general dispositions of Nature; when Nature is heightned into a kind of Fever and Ebullition of all her juices and humours, as she will be at that time, we must expect that more parts than ordinary, should be made inflammable, and those that are inflam'd should become more violent. Under these circumstances, when all Causes lean that way, a little help from a superiour power will have a great effect, and make a great change in the state of the World. And as to the power of Angels, I am of opinion that it is very great as to the Changes and Modifications of Natural Bodies; that they can dissolve a Marble as easily as we can crumble Earth and Moulds, or fix any liquor, in a moment, into a substance as hard as Crystal. That they can either make flames more vehement and irresistible to all sorts of Bodies; or as harmless as Lambent Fires, and as soft as Oyl. We

Dan. 3. 28.

see an instance of this last, in *Nebuchadnezzar's* fiery Furnace, where the three Children walk'd unconcern'd in the midst of the Flames, under the charge and protection of an Angel. And the same Angel, if he had pleas'd, could have made the same Furnace
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seven times hotter than the wrath of the Tyrant had made it.

We will therefore leave it to their ministry to manage this great Furnace, when the Heavens and the Earth are on Fire. To conserve, encrease, direct, or temper the flames, according to instructions given them, as they are to be *Tutelary* or *Destroying*. Neither let any body think it a diminution of Providence to put things into the hands of Angels; 'Tis the true rule and method of it; For to employ an Almighty power where it is not necessary, is to debase it, and give it a task fit for lower Beings. Some think it devotion and piety to have recourse immediately to the arm of God to save all things; This may be done sometimes with a good intention, but commonly with little judgment. God is as jealous of the glory of his Wisdom, as of his Power; and Wisdom consists in the conduct and subordination of several causes to bring our purposes to effect; but what is dispatched by an immediate Supreme Power, leaves no room for the exercise of Wisdom. To conclude this point, which I have touch'd upon more than once, We must not be partial to any of God's Attributes, and Providence being a complexion of many, Power, Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness, when we give due place and honour to all these, then we most honour DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

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CHAP. IX.

How the Sea will be diminish'd and consum'd. How the Rocks and Mountains will be thrown down and melted, and the whole exteriour frame of the Earth dissolv'd into a Deluge of Fire.

WE have now taken a view of the Causes of the Conflagration, both ordinary and extraordinary: It remains to consider the manner of it; How these Causes will operate, and bring to pass an effect so great and so prodigious. We took notice before that the grand obstruction would be from the Sea, and from the Mountains; we must therefore take these to task in the first place; and if we can remove them out of our way, or overcome what resistance and opposition they are capable to make, the rest of the work will not be uneasy to us.

The Ocean indeed is a vast Body of Waters; and we must use all our art and skill to dry it up, or consume it in a good measure, before we can compass our design. I remember the advice a Philosopher gave *Amasis* King of *Egypt*, when he had a command sent him from the King of *Æthiopia*, *That he should drink up the Sea.* *Amasis* being very anxious and solicitous what answer he should make to this strange command, the Philosopher *Bias* advis'd him to make this round answer to the King; *That he was ready to perform his command and to drink up the Sea, provided he would stop the rivers from flowing into his cup while he was drinking.* This answer baffled the King, for he could not stop the rivers; but this we must do, or we shall never be able to drink up the Sea, or burn up the Earth.

Neither will this be so impossible as it seems at first sight, if we reflect upon those preparations we have made towards it, by a general drought all over the Earth. This we suppose will precede the Conflagra-

flagration, and by drying up the Fountains and Rivers, which daily feed the Sea, will by degrees starve that Monster, or reduce it to such a degree of weakness, that it shall not be able to make any great resistance. More than half an Ocean of Water flows into the Sea every day, from the Rivers of the Earth, if you take them all together. This I speak upon a moderate computation. *Aristotle* says the Rivers carry more water into the Sea, in the space of a year, than would equal in bulk the whole Globe of the Earth. Nay some have ventur'd to affirm this of one single River, The *Volga*, that runs into the *Caspian* Sea. 'Tis a great River indeed, and hath seventy mouths; and so it had need have, to disgorge a mass of Water equal to the Body of the Earth, in a years time. But we need not take such high measures; There are at least an hundred great Rivers that flow into the Sea, from several parts of the Earth, Islands and Continents, besides several thousands of lesser ones; Let us suppose these, all together, to pour as much water into the Sea-chanel, every day, as is equal to half the Ocean. And we shall be easily convinc'd of the reasonableness of this supposition, if we do but examine the daily expence of one River, and by that make an estimate of the rest. This we find calculated to our hands in the *River Po* in *Italy*; a River of much what the same bigness with our *Thames*, and disburthens it self into the Gulph of *Venice*. *Baptista Riccioli* hath computed how much water this River discharges in an hour, viz. 18000000. cubical paces of Water, and consequently 432000000. in a day; which is scarce credible to those that do not distinctly compute it. Suppose then an hundred Rivers as great as this or greater, to fall into the Sea from the land; besides thousands of lesser, that pay their tribute at the same time into the great Receipt of the Ocean; These all taken together, are capable to renew the Sea every twice four and twenty hours. Which suppositions being admitted, if by a great and lasting drought these Rivers were dryed up, or the Fountains from whence they flow, what would then become of that vast Ocean, that before was so formidable to us?

'Tis likely you will say, These great Rivers cannot be dry'd up, tho' the little ones may; and therefore we must not suppose such an Universal stop of waters, or that they will all fail, by any drought whatsoever. But great Rivers being made up of little ones, if these fail, those must be diminish'd, if not quite drain'd and exhausted. It may be all Fountains and Springs do not proceed from the same causes, or the same original; and some are much more copious than others; for such differences we will allow what is due; but still the driness of the Air and of the Earth continuing, and all the sources and supplies of moisture, both from above and from below, being lessen'd or wholly discontinued, a general decay of all Fountains and Rivers must necessarily follow, and consequently of the Sea, and of its fulness that depends upon them. And that's enough for our present purpose.

The first step therefore towards the Consumption of the Ocean will be the diminution or suspension of the Rivers that run into it. The next will be an Evacuation by Subterraneous passages; And the last, by Eruptions of fires in the very Chanel of it, and in the midst of the waters. As for Subterraneous evacuations, we cannot doubt but that the Sea hath out-lets at the bottom of it; whereby it discharges that vast quantity of water that flows into it every day, and that could not be discharg'd so fast as it comes from the wide mouths of the Rivers, by percolation or straining thorough the Sands. Seas also communicate with one another by these internal passages; as is manifest from those particular Seas that have no external outlet or issue, tho' they receive into them many great Rivers, and sometimes the influx of other Seas. So the *Caspian* Sea receives not onely *Volga*, which we mention'd before, but several other Rivers, and yet hath no visible issue for its waters. The *Mediterranean* Sea, besides all the Rivers it receives, hath a current flowing into it, at either end, from other Seas; from the *Atlantick* Ocean at the streights of *Gibraltar*, and from the *Black Sea*, above *Constantinople*: and yet there is no passage above-ground, or visible derivation of the *Mediterranean* waters out of their Chanel; which seeing

ing they do not overfill, nor overflow the Banks, 'tis certain they must have some secret conveyances into the bowels of the Earth, or subterraneous communication with other Seas. Lastly, from the Whirl-pools of the Sea, that suck in Bodies that come within their reach, it seems plainly to appear, by that attraction and absorption, that there is a descent of waters in those places.

Wherefore when the current of the Rivers into the Sea is stopt, or in a great measure diminish'd; The Sea continuing to empty it self by these subterraneous passages, and having little or none of those supplies that it us'd to have from the Land, it must needs be sensibly lessen'd; and both contract its Chanel into a narrower compass, and also have less depth in the waters that remain. And in the last place, we must expect fiery eruptions in several parts of the Sea-chanel, which will help to suck up or evaporate the remaining waters. In the present state of Nature there have been several instances of such eruptions of fire from the bottom of the Sea; and in that last state of Nature, when all things are in a tendency to inflammation, and when Earth-quakes and Eruptions will be more frequent every where, we must expect them also more frequently by Sea, as well as by Land. 'Tis true, neither Earth-quakes nor Eruptions can happen in the middle of the Great Ocean, or in the deepest Abyss, because there are no cavities, or mines below it, for the vapours and exhalations to lodge in; But 'tis not much of the Sea-chanel that is so deep, and in other parts, especially in streights and near Islands, such Eruptions, like Sea-Volcano's, have frequently happen'd, and new Islands have been made by such fiery matter thrown up from the bottom of the Sea. Thus, they say, those Islands in the Mediterranean call'd the *Vulcanian* Islands, had their original; being matter cast up from the bottom of the Sea, by the force of fire; as new Mountains sometimes are rais'd upon the Earth. Another Island in the *Archipelago* had the same original, whereof *Strabo* gives an account. The flames, he says, sprung up thorough the waters, four days together, so as the whole Sea was hot and burning; and they

they rais'd by degrees, as with Engines, a mass of Earth, which made a new Island, twelve furlongs in compass. And in the same Archipelago, flames and smoak have several times (particularly in the year 1650.) rise out of the Sea, and fill'd the Air with sulphureous scents and vapours. In like manner, in the Island of St. Michel, one of the *Tercera's*, there have been, of later years, such eruptions of fire and flames; so strong and violent, that, at the depth of an hundred and sixty fathoms, they forc'd their way through the midst of the waters, from the bottom of the Sea into the open Air. As has been related by those that were eye-witnesses.

In these three ways, I conceive, the great force of the Sea will be broken, and the mighty Ocean reduc'd to a standing Pool of putrid waters, without vent and without recruits. But there will still remain in the midst of the Chanel a great mass of troubled liquors, like dregs in the bottom of the vessel; which will not be drunk up till the Earth be all on fire, and torrents of melted and sulphureous matter flow from the Land, and mingle with this Dead Sea. But let us now leave the Sea in this humble posture, and go on to attack the Rocks and Mountains which stand next in our way.

See how scornfully they look down upon us, and bid defiance to all the Elements. They have born the thunder and lightning of Heaven, and all the artillery of the Skies, for innumerable Ages; and do not fear the crackling of thorns and of shrubs that burn at their feet. Let the Towns and Cities of the Earth, say they, be laid in ashes; Let the Woods and Forests blaze away; and the fat Soyl of the Earth fry in its own grease; These things will not affect us; We can stand naked in the midst of a Sea of fire, with our roots as deep as the foundations of the Earth, and our heads above the Clouds of the Air. Thus they proudly defie Nature; and it must be confest, that these, being, as it were, the Bones of the Earth, when the Body is burning, will be the last consum'd; And I am apt to think, if they could keep in the same posture they stand in now, and preserve themselves from falling, the fire could never get an entire power over them.

them. But Mountains are generally hollow, and that makes them subject to a double casualty; first, of Earth-quakes, secondly, of having their roots eaten away by water or by fire; but by fire especially in this case: for we suppose there will be innumerable subterraneous fires smothering under ground, before the general fire breaks out; and these by corroding the bowels of the Earth, will make it more hollow and more ruinous; And when the Earth is so far dissolv'd, that the cavities within the Mountains are fill'd with Lakes of fire, then the Mountains will sink, and fall into those boyling Caldrons; which, in time, will dissolve them, tho' they were as hard as Adamant.

To conclude this point, the Mountains will all be brought low, in that state of nature, either by Earth-quakes or subterraneous fires; *Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low.* Isa. 40. 4.

Which will be literally true at the second coming of our Saviour, as it was figuratively apply'd to his first coming. Luke 3. 5. Now, being once level'd with the rest of the Earth, the question will onely be, how they shall be dissolv'd. But there is no Terrestrial Body indissolvable to Fire, if it have a due strength and continuance; and this last fire will have both, in the highest degrees; So that it cannot but be capable of dissolving all Elementary compositions, how hard or solid soever they be.

'Tis true, these Mountains and Rocks, as I said before, will have the priviledge to be the last destroy'd. These, with the deep parts of the Sea, and the Polar regions of the Earth, will undergo a slower fate, and be consum'd more leisurely. The action of the last Fire may be distinguish'd into two Times, or two assaults; The first assault will carry off all Mankind, and all the works of the Earth that are easily combustible; and this will be done with a quick and sudden motion. But the second assault, being employ'd about the consumption of such Bodies or such Materials as are not so easily subjected to fire, will be of long continuance, and the work of some years. And 'tis fit it should be so; that this Flaming World may be view'd and consider'd by the neighbouring Worlds about it, as a dreadful

dreadful spectacle, and monument of God's wrath against disloyal and disobedient Creatures. That by this example, now before their eyes, they may think of their own fate, and what may befall them, as well as another Planet of the same Elements and composition.

Thus much for the Rocks and Mountains; which, you see, according to our Hypothesis, will be level'd, and the whole face of the Earth reduc'd to plainness and equality; nay, which is more, melted and dissolved into a Sea of liquid Fire. And because this may seem a Paradox, being more than is usually supposed, or taken notice of, in the doctrine of the Conflagration, it will not be improper in this place to give an account, wherein our Idea of the Conflagration and its effects, differs from the common opinion and the usual representation of it. 'Tis commonly suppos'd, that the Conflagration of the World is like the burning of a City, where the Walls and materials of the Houses are not melted down, but scorch'd, inflam'd, demolish'd, and made uninhabitable. So they think in the Burning of the World, such Bodies, or such parts of Nature, as are fit Fuel for the Fire, will be inflam'd, and, it may be, consum'd, or reduc'd to smok and ashes; But other Bodies that are not capable of Inflammation, will only be scorch'd and defac'd, the beauty and furniture of the Earth spoil'd, and by that means, say they, it will be laid wast and become uninhabitable. This seems to me a very short and imperfect Idea of the Conflagration; neither agreeable to Scripture, nor to the deductions that may be made from Scripture. We therefore suppose that this is but half the work, this destroying of the outward garniture of the Earth is but the first onset, and that the Conflagration will end in a Dissolution and liquefaction of the Elements and all the exterior region of the Earth; so as to become a true Deluge of Fire, or a Sea of Fire overspreading the whole Globe of the Earth. This state of the Conflagration I think may be plainly prov'd, partly by the expressions of Scripture concerning it, and partly from the *Renovation* of
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of the Earth that is to follow upon it. St. Peter, who is our chief Guide in the doctrine of the Conflagration, says, *The Elements will be melted with fervent heat*; besides burning up the works of the Earth. Then adds, *Seeing all these things shall be dissolv'd, &c.* These terms of *Liquefaction* and *Dissolution* cannot, without violence, be restrained to simple devastation and superficial scorching. Such expressions carry the work a great deal further, even to that full sence which we propose. Besides, the Prophets often speak of the melting of the Earth, or of the hills and mountains; at the presence of the Lord, in the day of his wrath. And S. John (*Apoc.* 15. 2.) tells us of a *Sea of Glass, mingled with Fire*; where the Saints stood, singing the song of Moses, and triumphing over their enemies, the Spiritual Pharaoh and his host, that were swallowed up in it. That *Sea of Glass* must be a Sea of molten glass; it must be fluid, not solid, if a Sea; neither can a solid substance be said to be mingled with Fire, as this was. And to this answers the *Lake of fire and brimstone*, which the Beast and false Prophet were thrown into alive, *Apoc.* 19. 20. These all refer to the end of the World and the last Fire, and also plainly imply, or express rather, that state of Liquefaction which we suppose and assert.

Furthermore, The *Renovation* of the World, or *The New Heavens* and *New Earth*, which S. Peter, out of the Prophets, tells us shall spring out of these that are burnt and dissolved, do suppose this Earth reduc'd into a fluid Chaos, that it may lay a foundation for a second World. If you take such a Skeleton of an Earth, as your scorching Fire would leave behind it; where the flesh is torn from the bones, and the Rocks and Mountains stand naked and staring upon you; the Sea, half empty, gaping at the Sun, and the Cities all in ruins and in rubbish; How would you raise a New World from this? and a World fit to be an *habitation for the Righteous*; for so S. Peter makes that to be, which is to succeed after the Conflagration. And a World also without a Sea, so S. John describes the New Earth he saw. As these characters do not agree to the present Earth,

so neither would they agree to *your* Future one; for if that dead lump could revive and become habitable again, it would however retain all the imperfections of the former Earth, besides some scars and deformities of its own. Wherefore if you would cast the Earth into a new and better mould, you must first melt it down; and the last Fire, being as a *Refiner's* fire, will make an improvement in it, both as to matter and form. To conclude, it must be reduc'd into a fluid Mass, in the nature of a Chaos, as it was at first; but this last will be a Fiery Chaos, as that was Watery; and from this state it will emerge again into a Paradisiacal World. But this being the Subject of the following Book, we will discourse no more of it in this place.

CHAP. X.

Concerning the beginning and progress of the Conflagration, what part of the Earth will first be Burnt. The manner of the future destruction of Rome. The last state and consummation of the general Fire.

HAVING remov'd the chief obstructions to our design, and drawn a method for weakning the strength of Nature, by draining the Trench, and beating down those Bulwarks, wherein she seems to place her greatest confidence: we must now go to work; making choice of the weakest part of Nature for our first attack, where the fire may be the easiest admitted, and the best maintain'd and preserv'd.

And for our better direction, it will be of use to consider what we noted before, *viz.* That the Conflagration is not a pure *Natural Fatality*, but a *mixt Fatality*; or a Divine Judgment supported by Natural

ral Causes. And if we can find some part of the Earth, or of the Christian World, that hath more of these natural dispositions to Inflammation than the rest; and is also represented by Scripture as a more peculiar object of God's Judgments at the coming of our Saviour, we may justly pitch upon that part of the World as first to be destroyed. Nature and Providence conspiring to make that the first Sacrifice to this Fiery Vengeance.

Now as to Natural dispositions, in any Country or Region of the Earth, to be set on Fire, They seem to be chiefly these two, Sulphureousness of the Soil, and an hollow, mountainous construction of the ground. Where these two dispositions meet in the same tract or territory, (the one as to the quality of the matter, and the other as to the form) it stands like a Pile of fit materials, ready set to have the Fire put to it. And as to Divine Indications where this General Fire will begin, the Scripture points to the Seat of Antichrist wheresoever that is, for the beginning of it. The Scripture, I say, points at this, two ways, First, in telling us that our Saviour at his coming *in flames of Fire shall consume the wicked one,* ^{2 Thess. 1. 7.} *The Man of sin, the Son of perdition, with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of his presence.* ^{ch. 2. 8.} Secondly, under the name of *Mystical Babylon*; which is allowed by all to be the Seat of Antichrist, and by Scripture always condemn'd to the Fire. This we find in plain words asserted by S. John in the 18th chap. of his Revelations, and in the 19th. ^{ver. 8. & ver. 19.} (*ver. 3.*) under the name of the *Great Whore*; which is the same City and the same Seat, according to the interpretation of Scripture it self. And the Prophet ^{ch. 17. 18.} Daniel when he had set the *Ancient of Days* upon his fiery Throne, says, *The Body of the Beast was given to the burning flame.* ^{Dan. 7. 9, 10, 11.} Which I take to be the same thing with what S. John says afterwards, (*Apoc. 19. 20.*) *The Beast and the false Prophet were cast alive into a Lake of fire burning with brimstone.* By these places of Scripture it seems manifest, that Antichrist, and the Seat of Antichrist, will be consumed with Fire, at the coming of our Saviour. And 'tis very reasonable

and decorous, that the Grand Traitor and Head of the Apostasie should be made the first example of the divine vengeance.

Thus much being allow'd from Scripture, let us now return to Nature again; to seek out that part of the Christian World, that from its own constitution is most subject to burning; by the sulphureousness of its Soil, and its fiery Mountains and Caverns. This we shall easily find to be the *Roman Territory*, or the Countrey of *Italy*: which, by all accounts, ancient and modern, is a store-house of fire; as if it was condemn'd to that fate by God and Nature, and to be an Incendiary, as it were, to the rest of the World. And seeing *Mystical Babylon*, the Seat of Antichrist, is the same *Rome*, and its Territory; as it is understood by most Interpreters, of former and later Ages; you see both our lines meet in this point; And that there is a fairness, on both hands, to conclude, that, at the glorious appearance of our Saviour, the Conflagration will begin at the City of *Rome* and the *Roman Territory*.

Nature hath sav'd us the pains of kindling a fire in those parts of the Earth, for, since the memory of man, there have always been subterraneous fires in *Italy*. And the *Romans* did not preserve their Vestal fire with more constancy, than Nature hath done her fiery Mountains in some part or other of that Territory. Let us then suppose, when the fatal time draws near, all these Burning Mountains to be fill'd and replenish'd with fit materials for such a design; and when our Saviour appears in the Clouds, with an Host of Angels, that they all begin to play, as Fire-works at the Triumphal Entry of a Prince. Let *Vesuvius*, *Aetna*, *Strongyle*, and all the *Vulcanian* Islands, break out into flames; and by the Earth-quakes, which then will rage, let us suppose new Eruptions, or new Mountains open'd, in the *Apennines*, and near to *Rome*; and to vomit out fire in the same manner as the old Volcano's. Then let the sulphureous ground take fire; and seeing the Soil of that Countrey, in several places, is so full of brimstone, that the steams and smoke of it visibly rise out of the Earth; we may reasonably suppose,

suppose, that it will burn openly, and be inflam'd, at that time. Lastly, the Lightnings of the Air, and the flaming streams of the melting Skies, will mingle and joyn with these burnings of the Earth. And these three Causes meeting together, as they cannot but make a dreadful Scene, so they will easily destroy and consume whatsoever lies within the compass of their fury.

Thus you may suppose the beginning of the General Fire; And it will be carried on by like causes, tho' in lesser degrees, in other parts of the Earth. But as to *Rome*, there is still, in my opinion, a more dreadful fate that will attend it; namely, to be absorpt or swallowed up in a Lake of fire and brimstone, after the manner of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*. This, in my judgment, will be the fate and final conclusion of *Mystical Babylon*, to sink as a great Milstone into the Sea, and never to appear more. Hear what the Prophet says; *A mighty Angel took up a stone, like a great Milstone, and cast it into the Sea, saying, thus, with violence, shall that great City Babylon be thrown down; and shall be found no more at all.* Apoc. 18. 21. Simply to be burnt, does not at all answer to this description of its perishing, by *sinking like a Milstone into the Sea, and never appearing more, nor of, not having its place ever more found*; that is, leaving no remains or marks of it. A City that is onely burnt, cannot be said to *fall like a Milstone into the Sea*; or that it *can never more be found*: For after the burning of a City, the ruines stand, and its place is well known. Wherefore, in both respects, besides this exteriour burning, there must be an absorption of this *Mystical Babylon*, the Seat of the Beast; and thereupon a total disappearance of it. This also agrees with the suddenness of the judgment, which is a repeated character of it: *Chap. 18. 8, 10, 17, 19.* Now what kind of absorption this will be, into what, and in what manner, we may learn from what *St. John* says afterwards, (*ch. 19. 20.*) *The Beast and the false Prophet were cast alive into a Lake of fire and brimstone.* You must not imagine that they were bound, hand and foot, and so thrown headlong into this Lake, but they were swallowed up alive, they and theirs, as *Corah* and

and his company. Or, to use a plainer example, after the manner of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*; which perish't by fire, and at the same time sunk into a Dead Sea, or a Lake of brimstone.

This was a lively type of the fate of *Rome*, or *Mystical Babylon*; and 'tis fit it should resemble *Sodom*, as well in its punishment, as in its crimes. Neither is it a hard thing to conceive how such an absorption may come to pass; That being a thing so usual in Earth-quakes, and Earth-quakes being so frequent in that Region. And lastly, that this should be after the manner of *Sodom*, turn'd into a Lake of fire, will not be at all strange, if we consider, that there will be many subterraneous Lakes of fire at that time, when the bowels of the Earth begin to melt, and the Mountains spew out streams of liquid fire. The ground therefore being hollow and rotten in those parts, when it comes to be shaken with a mighty Earth-quake, the foundations will sink, and the whole frame fall into an Abyss of fire below, as a Millstone into the Sea. And this will give occasion to that Cry, *Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen*, and shall never more be found.

This seems to be a probable account, according to Scripture and reason, of the beginning of the general fire, and of the particular fate of *Rome*. But it may be propos'd here as an objection against this Hypothesis, that the Mediterranean Sea, lying all along the Coast of *Italy*, must needs be a sufficient guard to that Countrey against the invasion of fire; or at least must needs extinguish it, before it can do much mischief there, or propagate it self into other Countreys. I thought we had in a good measure prevented this objection before, by showing how the Ocean would be diminish'd before the Conflagration, and especially the Arms and Sinus's of the Ocean; and of these none would be more subject to this diminution than the Mediterranean, for receiving its supplies from the Ocean and the Black Sea, if these came to sink in their chanel, they would not rise so high, as to be capable to flow into the Mediterranean, at either end. And these supplies being cut off, it would soon empty it self so far, partly by evaporation, and partly by subterraneous

terraneous passages, as to shrink from all its shores, and become onely a standing Pool of water in the middle of the Chanel. Nay, 'tis possible, by flouds of fire descending from the many Volcano's upon its shores, it might it self be converted into a Lake of fire, and rather help than obstruct the progress of the Conflagration.

It may indeed be made a question, whether this fiery Vengeance upon the seat of Antichrist, will not precede the general Conflagration, at some distance of time, as a fore-runner and forewarner to the World; that the rest of the People may have space to repent; And particularly the *Jews*, being Spectators of this Tragedy, and of the miraculous appearance of our Saviour, may see the hand of God in it, and be convinc'd of the truth and divine authority of the Christian Religion. I say, this supposition would leave room for these and some other prophetick Scenes, which we know not well where to place; But seeing *The Day of the Lord* is represented in Scripture as one entire thing, without interruption or discontinuation, and that it is to begin with the destruction of Antichrist; we have warrant enough to pursue the rest of the Conflagration from this beginning and introduction.

Let us then suppose the same preparations made in the other parts of the Earth to continue the fire; for the Conflagration of the World being a work of providence, we may be sure such measures are taken, as will effectually carry it on, when once begun. The Body of the Earth will be loosen'd and broken by Earth-quakes, the more solid parts impregnated with sulphur, and the cavities fill'd with unctuous fumes and exhalations; so as the whole Mass will be but as one great funeral Pile, ready built, and wanting nothing but the hand of a destroying Angel, to give it fire. I will not take upon me to determine which way this devouring Enemy will steer his course from *Italy*, or in what order he will advance and enter the several Regions of our Continent; that would be an undertaking, as uncertain, as useless. But we cannot doubt of his success, which way soever he goes: unless where the Chanel of the Ocean may chance to stop him.

him. But as to that, we allow, that different Continents may have different Fires; not propagated from one another, but of distinct sources and originals; and so likewise in remote Islands; and therefore no long passage or trajection will be requir'd from shore to shore. And even the Ocean it self, will at length be as Fiery as any part of the Land; But that, with its Rocks, like Death, will be the last thing subdued.

As to the Animate World, the Fire will over-run it with a swift and rapid course, and all living Creatures will be suffocated or consumed, at the first assault. And at the same time, the beauty of the Fields and the external decorations of Nature will be defac'd. Then the Cities and the Towns, and all the works of man's hands, will burn like stubble before the wind. These will be soon dispatch'd; but the great burthen of the Work still remains; which is that *Liquefaction* we mention'd before, or a *melting fire*, much more strong and vehement than these transient blazes, which do but sweep the surface of the Earth. This Liquefaction, I say, we prov'd before out of Scripture, as the last state of the fiery Deluge. And 'tis this, which, at length, will make the Sea it self a *Lake of fire and brimstone*. When instead of rivers of Waters which used to flow into it from the Land, there come streams and rivulets of Sulphureous Liquors, and purulent melted matter, which, following the tract of their natural gravity will fall into this great drain of the Earth. Upon which mixture, the remaining parts of sweet water will soon evaporate, and the salt mingling with the Sulphur will make a Dead Sea, an *Asphaltites*, a Lake of *Sodom*, a Cup of the Wine of the fierceness of God's wrath.

We noted before two remarkable effects of the *Burning Mountains*, which would contribute to the Conflagration of the World; and gave instances of both in former Eruptions of *Ætna* and *Vesuvius*. One was, of those Balls or lumps of Fire, which they throw about in the time of their rage; and the other, of those torrents of liquid Fire, which rowl down their

their sides to the next Seas or Valleys. In the first respect these Mountains are as so many Batteries, planted by Providence in several parts of the Earth, to fling those fiery Bombs into such places, or such Cities, as are marked out for destruction. And in the second respect, they are to dry up the Waters, and the Rivers, and the Sea it self, when they fall into its chanel. *T. Fazellus*, a *Sicilian*, who writ the History of that Island, tells us of such a River of fire (upon an eruption of *Ætna*) near twenty eight miles long; reaching from the Mountain to *Port Longina*; and might have been much longer if it had not been stopt by the Sea. Many such as these, and far greater, we ought in reason to imagin, when all the Earth begins to melt, and to ripen towards a dissolution. It will then be full of these Sulphureous juices, as Grapes with Wine; and these will be squeez'd out of the Earth into the Sea, as out of a wine-press into the Receiver; to fill up that *Cup with the wine of the fierceness of God's wrath*.

If we may be allow'd to bring Prophetical passages of Scripture to a natural sence, as doubtless some of those must that respect the end of the World, these phrases which we have now suggested, of the *Wine-press of the wrath of God. Drinking the fierceness of his wine, poured, without mixture, into the cup of his indignation*, with expressions of the like nature that occur sometimes in the old Prophets, but especially in the Apocalypse; These, I say, might receive a full and emphatical explication from this state of things which now lies before us. I would not exclude any other explication of less force, as that of alluding to the *bitter cup* or *mixt potion* that us'd to be given to malefactors: but that, methinks, is a low sence when applyed to these places in the Apocalypse. That these phrases signifie God's remarkable judgments, all allow, and here they plainly relate to the end of the World, to the last Plagues, and the Last of the last Plagues, chap. 16. 19. Besides, the Angel that presided over this judgment, is said to be an Angel that *had power over fire*; And those who are to drink this potion, are said to be *tormented with fire and brimstone*, ch. 14. 10. This presiding Angel seems to be our

N

Saviour

*Annal. Sic.
dec. 1. li. 2. c. 4.*

*Apoc. 14. 10;
19.
c. 16. 19.
c. 19. 15.*

Saviour himself (c. 19. 15.) who when he comes to execute Divine Vengeance upon the Earth, gives his orders in these words, *Gather the clusters of the Vine of the Earth, for her grapes are fully ripe. And thereupon the Destroying Angel thrust in his sickle into the Earth, and gathered the Vine of the Earth, and cast it into the great Wine-press of the Wrath of God. And this made a* *τὸ κενυρασ-* *μὲν ἀπράτ.* *potion, compounded of several ingredients, but not diluted with water;* (ch. 14. 10.) and was indeed a potion of fire and brimstone and all burning materials mixt together. The similitudes of Scripture are seldom nice and exact, but rather bold, noble and great; and according to the circumstances which we have observ'd, This *Vineyard* seems to be the *Earth*, and this *Vintage* the end of the World; The pressing of the Grapes into the cup or vessel that receives them, the distillation of burning liquors from all parts of the Earth into the trough of the Sea; and that lake of red Fire, the bloud of those Grapes so flowing into it.

'Tis true, this judgment of the Vintage and Wine-press, and the effects of it, seem to aim more especially at some particular region of the Earth, ch. 14. 20. And I am not against that, provided the substance of the explication be still retained, and the universal Sea of Fire be that which follows in the next Chapter, under the name of a *Sea of Glass, mingled with Fire*; This I think expresses the highest and compleat state of the Conflagration; when the Mountains are fled away, and not only so, but the exterior region of the Earth quite dissolv'd, like wax before the Sun; The Chanel of the Sea fill'd with a mass of fluid fire, and the same fire overflowing all the Globe, and covering the whole Earth, as the Deluge, or the first Abyfs. Then will the Triumphal Songs and Hallelujah's be sung for the Victories of the Lamb over all his Enemies and over Nature it self. *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: Just and true are thy ways thou King of Saints. Who shall not fear thee O Lord, and glorifie thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.*

Apoc. 15.
3, 4.

ch. 16. 2.

C H A P. XI.

An Account of those extraordinary Phænomena and Wonders in Nature, that, according to Scripture, will precede the coming of Christ, and the Conflagration of the World.

IF we reflect upon the History of Burning Mountains, we cannot but observe, that, before their Eruptions, there are usually some changes in the Earth or in the Air, in the Sea or in the Sun it self; as signs and forerunners of the ensuing storm. We may then easily conclude that when the last great Storm is a coming, and all the Vulcano's of the Earth ready to burst, and the frame of the World to be dissolv'd, there will be previous signs, in the Heavens and on the Earth, to introduce this Tragical fate. Nature cannot come to that extremity, without some symptoms of her illness; nor die silently, without pangs or complaint. But we are naturally heavy of belief as to Futurities, and can scarce fancy any other Scenes, or other state of nature, than what is present, and continually before our eyes; we will therefore, to cure our unbelief, take Scripture for our guide, and keep within the limits of its Predictions.

The Scripture plainly tells us of Signs or Prodigies that will precede the coming of our Saviour, and the end of the World; both in the Heavens and on the Earth. The Sun, Moon, and Stars, will be disturb'd in their motion or aspect; The Earth and the Sea will roar and tremble, and the Mountains fall at his Presence. These things both the Prophets and Evangelists have told us; But what we do not understand, we are slow to believe; and therefore those that cannot apprehend how such Changes should come to pass in the Natural World, chuse rather to allegorize all these expressions of Scripture, and to make them signify no more than political changes of Governments

and Empires; and the great confusions that will be amongst the People and Princes of the Earth towards the end of the World. So that *darkning of the Sun, shaking of the Earth*, and such like phrases of Scripture, according to these Interpreters, are to be understood onely in a moral sence.

And they think they have a warrant for this interpretation from the Prophetick style of the old Testament, where the destruction of Cities, and Empires, and great Princes, is often describ'd by such figures, taken from the Natural World. So much is true indeed as to the phrase of the old Prophets in some places; but I take the true reason and design of that, to be a typical adumbration of what was intended should literally come to pass in the great and universal destruction of the World; whereof these partial destructions were onely shadows and prefigurations. But to determine this case, Let us take the known and approved rule for interpreting Scripture, *Not to recede from the literal sence without necessity*, or where the nature of the subject will admit of a literal interpretation. Now as to those cases in the old Testament, history and matter of fact do show that they did not come to pass literally, therefore must not be so understood; But as for those that concern the end of the World, as they cannot be determin'd in that way, seeing they are yet *future*; So neither is there any Natural repugnancy or improbability that they should come literally to pass: On the contrary, from the intuition of that state of Nature, one would rather conclude the probability or necessity of them; That there may and must be such disorders in the external World before the general dissolution. Besides, if we admit Prodigies in any case, or Providential indications of God's judgments to come, there can be no case suppos'd, wherein it will be more reasonable or proper to admit them, than when they are to be the Messengers of an Universal vengeance and destruction.

Let us therefore consider what signs Scripture hath taken notice of, as destin'd to appear at that time, to publish, as it were, and proclaim the approaching end of the World; And how far they will admit of a natural

tural explication, according to those grounds we have already given, in explaining the causes and manner of the Conflagration. These Signs are chiefly, Earth-quakes, and extraordinary commotions of the Seas. Then the darkness or bloody colour of the Sun and Moon; The shaking of the Powers of Heaven, the fulgurations of the Air and the falling of Stars. As to Earth-quakes, we have upon several occasions shown, that these will necessarily be multiplied towards the end of the World; when, by an excess of drought and heat, exhalations will more abound within the Earth; and, from the same causes, their inflammation also will be more frequent, than in the ordinary state of nature. And as all Bodies, when dry'd, become more porous and full of Vacuities; so the Body of the Earth will be at that time: And the Mines or Cavities wherein the fumes and exhalations lodge, will accordingly be of greater extent, open into one another, and continued through long tracts and regions; By which means, when an Earth-quake comes, as the shock will be more strong and violent, so it may reach to a vast compass of ground, and whole Islands or Continents be shaken at once, when these trains have taken fire. The effects also of such concussions, will not onely affect Mankind, but all the Elements and the Inhabitants of them.

I do not wonder therefore that frequent and great Earth-quakes should be made a sign of an approaching Conflagration; and the highest expressions of the Prophets concerning the *Day of the Lord*, may be understood in a literal sence, if they be finally referr'd to the general destruction of the World, and not terminated solely upon those particular Countries or People, to whom they are at first directed. Hear what *Ezekiel* says upon this subject: *For in my Jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken; Surely in that Day there shall be a great shaking in the Land of Israel. So that the Fishes of the Sea, and the Fowls of the Heaven, and the Beasts of the Field, and all creeping things that creep upon the Earth; and all the Men that are upon the face of the Earth, shall shake at my presence; and the Mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall,*

Ch. 38. 19, 20, 22.

fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. ----- And I will rain an over-flowing rain, and great hail-stones, fire and brimstone. The Prophet *Isaias* describes these judgments in terms as high, and relating to the Natural World: *The Windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the Earth do shake. The Earth is utterly broken down, the Earth is clean dissolv'd, the Earth is moved exceedingly. The Earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a Cottage, and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall and not rise again.*

ch. 24. 18,
19, 20.

To restrain all these things to *Judea*, as their adequate and final object, is to force both the words and the sense. Here are manifest allusions and foot-steps of the destruction of the World, and the dissolution of the Earth; partly as it was in the Deluge, and partly as it will be in its last ruine; torn, broken, and shatter'd. But most Men have fallen into that error, To fancy both the destructions of the World, by water and by fire, quiet, noiseless things; executed without any ruines or ruptures in Nature; That the Deluge was but a great Pool of still waters, made by the rains and inundation of the Sea: and the Conflagration will be only a superficial scorching of the Earth, with a running fire. These are false Ideas, and unsuitable to Scripture: for as the Deluge is there represented a Disruption of the Abyss, and consequently of the then habitable Earth; so the future combustion of it, according to the representations of Scripture, is to be usher'd in and accompanied with all sort of violent impressions upon Nature; and the chief instrument of these violences will be Earth-quakes. These will tear the Body of the Earth, and shake its foundations; rend the Rocks, and pull down the tall Mountains; sometimes overturn, and sometimes swallow up Towns and Cities; disturb and disorder the Elements, and make a general confusion in Nature.

Next to Earth-quakes, we may consider the *roarings of a troubled Sea*. This is another sign of a dying World. St. *Luke* hath set down a great many of them together; Let us hear his words: *And there shall be signs in the Sun, and in the Moon, and in the Stars; and upon*

ch. 21. 25,
26, 27.

upon the Earth, distress of Nations, with perplexity, The Sea and the Waves roaring. Mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the Earth: for the powers of Heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory, &c. As some would allegorize these Signs, which we noted before; so others would confine them to the destruction of *Jerusalem*. But 'tis plain, by this coming of the Son of man in the *Ver. 28.* clouds, and the redemption of the faithful, and at the same time, the sound of the last trumpet, which all relate to the end of the World, that something further is intended than the destruction of *Jerusalem*. *Mat. 24. 31.* And though there were Prodigies at the destruction of that City and State, yet not of this force, nor with these circumstances. 'Tis true, those partial destructions and calamities, as we observ'd before, of *Babylon, Jerusalem,* and the *Roman Empire*, being types of an universal and final destruction of all God's Enemies, have, in the pictures of them, some of the same strokes, to show they are all from the same hand; decreed by the same wisdom, foretold by the same Spirit; and the same power and providence that have already wrought the one, will also work the other, in due time; the former being still pledges, as well as prefigurations, of the latter.

Let us then proceed in our explication of this sign, *The roaring of the Sea, and the Waves*, applying it to the end of the World. I do not look upon this ominous noise of the Sea, as the effect of a tempest, for then it would not strike such a terrour into the Inhabitants of the Earth, nor make them apprehensive of some great evil coming upon the World, as this will do; what proceeds from visible causes, and such as may happen in a common course of Nature, does not so much amaze us, nor affright us. Therefore 'tis more likely these disturbances of the Sea proceed from below; partly by sympathy and revulsions from the Land; by Earth-quakes there, and exhausting the subterraneous cavities of waters, which will draw again from the Seas what supplies they can: And partly by Earth-quakes in the very Sea it self; with exhalations and

and fiery Eruptions from the bottom of it. Things indeed that happen at other times, more or less, but at this conjuncture, all causes conspiring, they will break out with more violence, and put the whole Body of the Waters into a tumultuary motion. I do not see any occasion, at this time, for high Winds; neither can think a superficial agitation of the Waves would answer this Phenomenon; but 'tis rather from Contorsions in the bowels of the Ocean, which make it roar, as it were, for pain. Some Causes impelling the Waters one way, and some another, make intestine struglings and contrary motions; from whence proceed unusual noises, and such a troubled state of the Waters, as does not only make the Sea innavigable, but also strikes terror into all the Maritime inhabitants, that live within the view or sound of it.

So much for the Earth and the Sea. The face of the Heavens also will be chang'd in divers respects. The Sun and the Moon darkned, or of a bloudy, or pale countenance; The Celestial Powers shaken, and the Stars unsetled in their Orbs. As to the Sun and Moon, their obscuration or change of colour is no more than what happens commonly before the Eruption of a fiery Mountain; *Dion Cassius*, you see, hath taken notice of it in that Eruption of *Ætna* which he describes; and others upon the like occasions in *Vesuvius*. And 'tis a thing of easie explication; for according as the Atmosphere is more or less clear or turbid, the Luminaries are more or less conspicuous; and according to the nature of those fumes or exhalations that swim in the Air, the face of the Sun is discolour'd, sometimes one way, sometimes another. You see, in an ordinary Experiment, when we look upon one another through the fumes of Sulphur, we appear pale like so many Ghosts; and in some foggy days the Sun hangs in the Firmament as a lump of Bloud. And both the Sun and Moon at their rising, when their light comes to us through the thick vapours of the Earth, are red and fiery. These are not changes wrought in the substance of the Luminaries, but in the modifications of their light as it flows to us.

us. For colours are but Light in a sort of disguise; as it passes through *Mediums* of different qualities, it takes different forms; but the matter is still the same, and returns to its simplicity when it comes again into a pure air.

Now the air may be changed and corrupted to a great degree, tho' there appear no visible change to our eye. This is manifest from infectious airs, and the changes of the air before storms and rains; which we feel commonly sooner than we see, and some other creatures perceive much sooner than we do. 'Tis no wonder then if before this mighty storm the dispositions of the Air be quite alter'd; especially if we consider, what we have so often noted before, that there will be a great abundance of fumes and exhalations through the whole Atmosphere of the Earth, before the last Fire breaks out; whereby the Light of the Sun may be tinctur'd in several ways. And lastly, it may be so order'd providentially, that the Body of the Sun may contract at that time some Spots or *Maculae* far greater than usual, and by that means be really darkened; not to us only, but to all the neighbouring Planets. And this will have a proportionable effect upon the Moon too, for the diminution of her light. So that upon all suppositions these Phenomena are very intelligible, if not necessary forerunners of the Conflagration.

The next Sign given us, is, that the *powers of heaven will be shaken*. By the *Heavens* in this place is either understood the Planetary Heavens, or that of the *Fix'd Stars*; but this latter being infinitely distant from the Earth, cannot be really affected by the Conflagration. Nor the powers of it, that is, its motions or the Bodies contain'd in it, any way shaken or disorder'd. But in appearance these celestial Bodies may seem to be shaken and their motions disorder'd; as in a tempest by night, when the ship is toss'd with contrary and uncertain motions, the Heavens seem to fluctuate over our heads, and the Stars to reel to and fro, when the motion is only in our own Vessel. So possibly the uncertain motions of the Atmosphere, and sometimes of the Earth it self, may so vary the

fight and aspect of this starry Canopy, that it may seem to shake and tremble.

But if we understand this of the *Planetary Heavens*, They may really be shaken. Providence either ordering some great changes in the other Planets previously to the Conflagration of our Planet; as 'tis probable there was a great change in *Venus*, at the time of our *Deluge*. Or the great shakings and concussions of our Globe at that time, affecting some of the neighbouring Orbs, at least that of the Moon, may cause Anomalies and irregularities in their motions. But the sense that I should pitch upon chiefly for explaining this phrase of *shaking the powers of heaven*, comprehends, in a good measure, both these Heavens, of the Fix'd Stars and of the Planets; 'Tis that change of situation in the Axis of the Earth, which we have formerly mention'd; whereby the Stars will seem to change their places, and the whole Universe to take another posture. This is sufficiently known to those that know the different consequences of a strait or oblique posture of the Earth. And as the heavens and the earth were, in this sense, once shaken before; namely at the Deluge, when they lost their first situation; so now they will be shaken again, and thereby return to the posture they had before that first concussion. And this I take to be the true literal sense of the Prophet *Haggai*, repeated by *S. Paul*, *Yet once more I shake not the Earth only, but also heaven.*

ch. 2. 6.

Hebr. 12. 26.

The last Sign we shall take notice of, is that of *Falling Stars*. *And the Stars shall fall from Heaven*, says our Saviour, *Matt. 24. 29*. We are sure, from the nature of the thing, that this cannot be understood either of fix'd Stars or Planets; for if either of these should tumble from the Skies, and reach the Earth, they would break it all in pieces, or swallow it up, as the Sea does a sinking ship; and at the same time would put all the inferiour universe into confusion. It is necessary therefore by these Stars to understand either fiery Meteors falling from the middle Region of the Air, or Comets and Blazing Stars. No doubt there will be all sorts of fiery Meteors at that time; and amongst

amongst others, those that are call'd *Falling Stars*; which, tho' they are not considerable singly, yet if they were multiplyed in great numbers, falling, as the Prophet says, as *leaves from the Vine, or figs from the fig-tree*, they would make an astonishing sight. But I think this expression does chiefly refer to Comets; which are dead Stars, and may truly be said to fall from heaven, when they leave their seats above, and those ethereal regions wherein they were fixt, and sink into this lower World; where they wander about with a blaze in their tail, or a flame about their head, as if they came on purpose to be the Messengers of some fiery Vengeance. If numbers of these blazing Stars should fall into our heaven together, they would make a dreadful and formidable appearance; And I am apt to think that Providence hath so contriv'd the periods of their motion, that there will be an unusual concourse of them at that time, within the view of the Earth, to be a prelude to this last and most Tragical Scene of the Sublunary World.

I do not know any more in Scripture relating to the last Fire, that, upon the grounds laid down in this discourse, may not receive a satisfactory explication. It reaches, beyond the Signs before mention'd, to the highest expressions of Scripture, As *Lakes of fire and brimstone, a molten Sea mingled with fire, the Liquefaction of Mountains*, and of the Earth it self. We need not now look upon these things as Hyperbolical and Poetical strains, but as barefac'd Prophecies, and things that will literally come to pass as they are predicted. One thing more will be expected in a just hypothesis or Theory of the Conflagration, namely, that it should answer, not only all the conditions and characters belonging to the last Fire, but should also make way and lay the foundation of another World to succeed this, or of *New Heavens* and a *New Earth*. For *S. Peter* hath taught this doctrine of the *Renovation* of the World, as positively and expressly as that of its Conflagration. And therefore they that so explain the destruction of the present World, as to leave it afterwards in an eternal rubbish, without any hopes of restoration, do not answer the Christian doctrine con-

cerning it. But as to our Hypothesis, we are willing to stand this farther trial, and be accountable for the consequences of the Conflagration, as well as the Antecedents and manner of it. And we have accordingly in the following Book, from the Ashes of this, rais'd a New Earth; which we leave to the enjoyment of the Readers. In the mean time, to close our discourse, we will bid farewell to the present World, in a short review of its last flames.

CHAP. XII.

An imperfect description of the Coming of our Saviour, and of the World on Fire.

Certainly there is nothing in the whole course of Nature, or of Humane affairs, so great and so extraordinary, as the two last Scenes of them, THE COMING OF OUR SAVIOUR, and the BURNING OF THE WORLD. If we could draw in our minds the Pictures of these, in true and lively colours, We should scarce be able to attend to any thing else, or ever divert our imagination from these two objects. For what can more affect us than the greatest Glory that ever was visible upon Earth, and at the same time the greatest Terror. A God descending in the Head of an Army of Angels, and a Burning World under his feet.

These are things truly above expression; And not only so, but so different and remote from our ordinary thoughts and conceptions, that he that comes nearest to a true description of them, shall be look'd upon as the most extravagant. 'Tis our unhappiness to be so much used to little trifling things in this life, that when any thing great is represented to us, it appears phantastical: An Idea, made by some contemplative or melancholy person. I will not venture therefore, without premising some grounds out of

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Scripture, to say any thing concerning This Glorious Appearance. As to the Burning of the World; I think we have already laid a foundation sufficient to support the highest description that can be made of it; But the coming of our Saviour being wholly out of the way of Natural Causes, it is reasonable we should take all directions we can from Scripture; that we may give a more fitting and just account of that Sacred Pomp.

I need not mention those places of Scripture that prove the second coming of our Saviour in general, or his return to the Earth again at the end of the World: no Christian can doubt of this, 'tis so often repeated in those Sacred Writings. But the manner and circumstances of this Coming, or of this Appearance, are the things we now enquire into. And in the first place, we may observe that Scripture tells us our Saviour will come in *Flaming Fire*, and with an *Host of mighty Angels*; so says S. Paul to the *Thes-
salonians*, *The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with mighty Angels; in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.* In the second place, our Saviour says himself, *The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his Angels.* From which two places we may learn, first, that the appearance of our Saviour will be with flames of Fire. Secondly, with an Host of Angels. Thirdly, in the glory of his Father. By which glory of the Father I think is understood that Throne of Glory represented by *Daniel* for the *Ancient of Days*. For our Saviour speaks here to the *Jews*, and probably in a way intelligible to them; And the Glory of the Father which they were most likely to understand, would be either the Glory wherein God appeared at Mount *Sinai*, upon the giving of the Law, whereof the Apostle speaks largely to the *Hebrews*; or that which *Daniel* represents Him in at the day of Judgment. And this latter being more proper to the subject of our Saviour's discourse, 'tis more likely this expression refers to it. Give me leave therefore to set down that description of the Glory of the Father upon his Throne, from the

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Matt. 24. 30.
31. Act. 1. 11.
3. 20, 21.
Apoc. 1. 7.
Heb. 9. 28.

1 Ep. 1. 7.

Matt. 16. 27.

ch. 12. 18, 19,
20, 21.

Pro-

*Tis ill rendered in the English, cast down.

Prophet Daniel, ch. 7, 9. *And I beheld till the Thrones were * set, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him, thousand thousands ministred unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. With this Throne of the glory of the Father, let us, if you please, compare the Throne of the Son of God, as it was seen by St. John in the Apocalypse, ch. 4. 2, &c. And immediately I was in the Spirit: and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sate on the Throne. And he that sat, was to look upon like a Jasper, and a Sardine stone: and there was a Rain-bow round about the Throne, in appearance like unto an Emerald. And out of the Throne proceeded Lightnings, and Thunderings, and Voices, &c. and before the Throne was a Sea of glass like unto Crystal.*

In these representations you have some beams of the glory of the Father and of the Son; which may be partly a direction to us, in conceiving the lustre of our Saviour's appearance. Let us further observe, if you please, how external nature will be affected at the sight of God, or of this approaching glory. The Scripture often takes notice of this, and in terms very high and eloquent. The Psalmist seems to have lov'd that subject above others; to set out the greatness of the day of the Lord, and the consternation of all nature at that time. He throws about his thunder and lightning, makes the Hills to melt like wax at the presence of the Lord, and the very foundations of the Earth to tremble, as you may see in the 18th. Psalm, and the 97. and the 104. and several others, which are too long to be here inserted. So the Prophet Habakkuk, in his Prophetick prayer, Chap. 3d. hath many Ejaculations to the like purpose. And the Prophet Nahum says, *The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the Earth is burnt at his presence: yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.*

But more particularly, as to the face of Nature just before the coming of our Saviour, that may be best collected from the signs of his coming mention'd in the precedent Chapter. Those all meeting together, help

help to prepare and make ready a Theater, fit for an angry God to come down upon. The countenance of the Heavens will be dark and gloomy; and a Veil drawn over the face of the Sun. The Earth in a disposition every where to break into open flames. The tops of the Mountains smoaking; the Rivers dry; Earth-quakes in several places; the Sea sunk and retir'd into its deepest Chancel, and roaring, as against some mighty storm. These things will make the day dead and melancholy, but the Night-Scenes will have more of horreur in them. When the *Blazing-Stars* appear, like so many Furies, with their lighted Torch-
es, threatening to set all on fire. For I do not doubt but the Comets will bear a part in this Tragedy, and have something extraordinary in them, at that time; either as to number, or bigness, or nearness to the Earth. Besides, the Air will be full of flaming Meteors, of unusual forms and magnitudes; Balls of fire rowling in the Skie, and pointed lightnings darted against the Earth; mixt with claps of thunder, and unusual noises from the Clouds. The Moon and the Stars will be confus'd and irregular, both in their light and motions; as if the whole frame of the Heavens was out of order, and all the laws of Nature were broken or expir'd.

When all things are in this languishing or dying posture, and the Inhabitants of the Earth under the fears of their last end; The Heavens will open on a sudden, and the Glory of God will appear. A Glory surpassing the Sun in its greatest radiancy; which, tho' we cannot describe, we may suppose it will bear some resemblance or proportion with those representations that are made in Scripture, of *God upon his Throne*. This wonder in the Heavens, whatsoever its form may be, will presently attract the eyes of all the Christian World. Nothing can more affect them than an object so unusual and so illustrious; and that, (probably) brings along with it their last destiny, and will put a period to all humane affairs.

Some of the Ancients have thought that this coming of our Saviour would be in the dead of the night, *1 Pet. 3. 10.* and his first glorious appearance in the midst of darkness.

riels. God is often describ'd in Scripture as Light or Fire, with darkness round about him. *He bowed the Heavens and came down, and darkness was under his feet.* *He made darkness his secret place: His pavilion round about him were dark Waters and thick Clouds of the Skies.* At the brightness that was before him, the thick Clouds passed. And when God appear'd upon Mount Sinai, the Mountain burnt with fire unto the midst of Heaven with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness: Or, as the Apostle expresses it, with blackness and darkness, and tempest. Light is never more glorious than when surrounded with darkness; and it may be the Sun, at that time, will be so obscure, as to make little distinction of Day and Night. But however this Divine Light over-bears and distinguishes it self from common Light, tho' it be at Mid-day. 'Twas about Noon that the Light shin'd from Heaven and surrounded St. Paul. And 'twas on the Day-time that St. Stephen saw the Heavens opened; saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. This light, which flows from a more vital source, be it Day or Night, will always be predominant.

That appearance of God upon Mount Sinai, which we mention'd, if we reflect upon it, will help us a little to form an Idea of this last appearance. When God had declar'd, that he would come down in the sight of the People; The Text says, *There were thunders and lightnings, and a thick Cloud upon the Mount, and the voice of the Trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the Camp trembled. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. And the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole Mount quaked greatly.* If we look upon this Mount as an Epitome of the Earth, this appearance gives us an imperfect resemblance of that which is to come. Here are the several parts or main strokes of it; first, the Heavens and the Earth in smoke and fire, then the appearance of a Divine Glory, and the sound of a Trumpet in the presence of Angels. But as the second coming of our Saviour is a Triumph over his Enemies, and an entrance into his Kingdom, and is acted upon the Theater of the whole Earth;

so we are to suppose, in proportion, all the parts and circumstances of it, more great and magnificent.

When therefore this mighty God returns again to that Earth, where he had once been ill treated, not Mount *Sinai* only, but all the Mountains of the Earth, and all the Inhabitants of the World, will tremble at his presence. At the first opening of the Heavens, the brightness of his Person will scatter the dark Clouds, and shoot streams of light throughout all the Air. But that first appearance, being far from the Earth, will seem to be onely a great mass of light, without any distinct form; till, by nearer approaches, this bright Body shows it self to be an Army of Angels, with this King of kings for their Leader. Then you may imagine how guilty Mankind will tremble and be astonish'd; and while they are gazing at this heavenly Host, the Voice of the *Archangel* is heard, the shrill sound of the Trumpet reaches their ears. And this gives the general Alarum to all the World. *For he cometh, for he cometh, they cry, to judge the Earth.* The crucified God is return'd in Glory, to take Vengeance upon his Enemies: Not onely upon those that pierc'd his Sacred Body, with Nails and with a Spear, at *Jerusalem*; but those also that pierce him every day by their prophaneness and hard speeches, concerning his Person and his Religion. Now they see that God whom they have mock'd, or blasphem'd, laugh't at his meanness, or at his vain threats; They see Him, and are confounded with shame and fear; and in the bitterness of their anguish and despair call for the Mountains to fall upon them. *Fly into the clefts of the Rocks, and into the Caves of the Earth, for fear of the Lord, and the glory of his Majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the Earth.* *Isa. 2. 19.
Rev. 6. 16, 17.*

As it is not possible for us to express or conceive the dread and majesty of this appearance; so neither can we, on the other hand, express the passions and consternation of the People that behold it. These things exceed the measures of humane affairs, and of humane thoughts; we have neither words, nor comparisons, to make them known by. The greatest pomp and magnificence of the Emperors of the East, in their

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Armies,

Armies, in their triumphs, in their inaugurations, is but like the sport and entertainment of Children, if compar'd with this Solemnity. When God condescends to an external glory, with a visible Train and Equipage: When, from all the Provinces of his vast and boundless Empire, he summons his Nobles, as I may so say: The several orders of Angels and Arch-Angels, to attend his Person; tho' we cannot tell the form or manner of this Appearance, we know there is nothing in our experience, or in the whole history of this World, that can be a just representation of the least part of it. No Armies so numerous as the Host of Heaven: and in the midst of those bright Legions, in a flaming Chariot, will sit the Sun of Man, when he comes to be glorified in his Saints, and triumph over his Enemies. And instead of the wild noises of the rabble, which makes a great part of our worldly state: This blessed Company will breath their *Halleluiahs* into the open Air; and repeated acclamations of *Salvation to God, which sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb. Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.*

*Apoc. 7. 10.
& 12. 10.*

But I leave the rest to our silent devotion and admiration. Onely give me leave, whilst this object is before our eyes, to make a short reflection upon the wonderful history of our Saviour; and the different states, which that Sacred Person, within the compass of our knowledge, hath undergone. We now see him coming in the Clouds in glory and triumph, surrounded with innumerable Angels. This is the same Person, who, so many hundred Years ago, enter'd *Jerusalem*, with another sort of Equipage: mounted upon an Ass's Colt, while the little people and the multitude cry'd, *Hosanna* to the *Son of David*. Nay, this is the same Person, that, at his first coming into this World, was laid in a Manger instead of a Cradle; A naked Babe dropt in a Crib at *Bethlehem*: His poor Mother not having wherewithall to get her a better Lodging, when she was to be deliver'd of this Sacred burthen. This helpless Infant, that often wanted a little Milk to refresh it, and support its weakness: That hath often cry'd for the Breast, with hunger and tears:

Luke 2. 12.

now

now appears to be the Lord of Heaven and Earth. If this Divine Person had fallen from the clouds in a mortal Body, cloath'd with Flesh and Bloud, and spent his life here amongst sinners; that alone had been an infinite condescension. But as if it had not been enough to take upon him humane Nature, he was content, for many months, to live the life of an Animal, or of a Plant, in the dark cell of a woman's Womb. *This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes.*

Neither is this all that is wonderful in the story of our Saviour. If the manner of his death be compar'd with his present glory, we shall think, either the one, or the other, incredible. Look up, first, into the Heavens: see how they bow under him, and receive a new light from the Glory of his Presence. Then look down upon the Earth, and see a naked Body hanging upon a cursed Tree in *Golgotha*: crucified betwixt two Thieves: wounded, spit upon, mock'd, abus'd. Is it possible to believe that one and the same person can act or suffer such different parts? That he, that is now Lord and Master of all Nature: not only of Death and Hell, and the powers of darkness: but of all Principalities in heavenly places: is the same Infant Jesus, the same crucified Jesus, of whose life and death the Christian records give us an account? The History of this person is the Wonder of this World; and not of this World only, but of the Angels above, that desire to look into it. 1 Pet. i.
11, 12.

Let us now return to our subject. We left the Earth in a languishing condition, ready to be made a Burnt-offering, to appease the wrath of its offended Lord. When *Sodom* was to be destroy'd, *Abraham* Gen. 18. interceded with God that he would spare it for the Righteous sake: And *David* interceded to save his 2 Sam. 24. 17 guiltless People from God's Judgments and the Destroying Angel. But here is no Intercessor for mankind in this last extremity: None to interpose where the Mediator of our Peace is the party offended. Shall then *the righteous perish with the wicked?* Shall *not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* Or if the Righteous be translated and delivered from This Fire,

what shall become of innocent children and Infants? Must these all be given up to the merciless flames, as a Sacrifice to *Moloch*? and their tender flesh, like burnt incense, send up fumes to feed the nostrils of evil Spirits? Can the God of *Israel* smell a sweet savour from such Sacrifices? The greater half of mankind is made up of Infants and Children: and if the wicked be destroyed, *yet these Lambs, what have they done?* are there no bowels of compassion for such an harmless multitude? But we leave them to their Guardian

Matt. 18. 10. Angels, and to that Providence which watches over all things.

It only remains therefore, to let fall that Fire from Heaven, which is to consume this Holocaust. Imagine all Nature now standing in a silent expectation to receive its last doom: The Tutelary and Destroying Angels to have their instructions: Every thing to be ready for the fatal hour: And then, after a little silence, all the Host of Heaven to raise their voice and sing aloud, *LET GOD ARISE: Let his enemies be scattered. As smoak is driven away, so drive them away: As wax melteth before the fire, so LET the wicked perish at the presence of God.* And upon this, as upon a signal given, all the sublunary World breaks into Flames, and all the Treasuries of Fire are open'd, in Heaven and in Earth.

Thus the Conflagration begins. If one should now go about to represent *the World on Fire*, with all the confusions that necessarily must be, in Nature and in Mankind, upon that occasion, it would seem to most men a Romantick Scene. Yet we are sure there must be such a Scene. *The heavens will pass away with a noise, and the Elements will melt with fervent heat, and all the works of the Earth will be burnt up.* And these things cannot come to pass without the greatest disorders imaginable, both in the minds of Men and in external Nature: and the saddest spectacles that eye can behold. We think it a great matter to see a single person burnt alive: here are Millions, shrieking in the flames at once. 'Tis frightful to us to look upon a great City in flames, and to see the distractions and misery of the people: here is an Universal
Fire

Fire through all the Cities of the Earth, and an Universal Massacre of their Inhabitants. Whatsoever the Prophets foretold of the desolations of *Judea*, *Jerusalem*, or *Babylon*, in the highest strains, is more than literally accomplish'd in this last and general Calamity: And those only that are Spectators of it, can make its History.

The disorders in Nature and the inanimate World will be no less, nor less strange and unaccountable, than those in Mankind. Every Element, and every Region, so far as the bounds of this Fire extend, will be in a tumult and a fury, and the whole habitable World running into confusion. A World is sooner destroyed than made, and Nature relapses hastily into that Chaos-state, out of which she came by slow and leisurely motions. As an Army advances into the field by just and regular marches, but when it is broken and routed, it flies with precipitation, and one cannot describe its posture. Fire is a barbarous Enemy, it gives no mercy; there is nothing but fury, and rage, and ruine, and destruction, wheresoever it prevails. A storm or *Hurricano*, tho' it be but the force of Air, makes a strange havock where it comes; but devouring flames, or exhalations set on Fire, have still a far greater violence, and carry more terror along with them. Thunder and Earthquakes are the Sons of Fire: and we know nothing in all Nature, more impetuous, or more irresistibly destructive than these two. And accordingly in this last war of the Elements, we may be sure, they will bear their parts, and do great execution in the several regions of the World. Earthquakes and Subterraneous Eruptions will tear the body and bowels of the Earth; and Thunders and convulsive motions of the Air, rend the Skies. The waters of the Sea will boyl and struggle with streams of Sulphur that run into them; which will make them fume, and smoke, and roar, beyond all storms and tempests. And these noises of the Sea will be answered again from the Land by falling Rocks and Mountains. This is a small part of the disorders of that day.

But

Isa. 30.

But 'tis not possible, from any station, to have a full prospect of this last Scene of the Earth: for 'tis a mixture of fire and darkness. This new Temple is fill'd with smoak, while it is consecrating, and none can enter into it. But I am apt to think, if we could look down upon this burning World from above the Clouds, and have a full view of it, in all its parts, we should think it a lively representation of *Hell* it self. For, Fire and darkness are the two chief things by which that state, or that place, uses to be describ'd: and they are both here mingled together: with all other ingredients that make that Tophet that is prepar'd of old. Here are Lakes of fire and brimstone: Rivers of melted glowing matter: Ten thousand Volcano's vomiting flames all at once. Thick darkness, and Pillars of smoke twisted about with wreaths of flame, like fiery Snakes. Mountains of Earth thrown up into the Air, and the Heavens dropping down in lumps of fire. These things will all be literally true, concerning that day, and that state of the Earth. And if we suppose *Beelzebub*, and his Apostate crew, in the midst of this fiery furnace: (and I know not where they can be else.) It will be hard to find any part of the Universe, or any state of things, that answers to so many of the properties and characters of *Hell*, as this which is now before us.

But if we suppose the storm over, and that the fire hath got an entire victory over all other bodies, and subdued every thing to it self, the Conflagration will end in a Deluge of fire: Or, in a Sea of fire, covering the whole Globe of the Earth. For, when the exterior region of the Earth is melted into a fluor, like molten glass, or running metal; it will, according to the nature of other Fluids, fill all vacuities and depressions, and fall into a regular surface, at an equal distance, every where, from its center. This Sea of fire, like the first Abyss, will cover the face of the whole Earth: make a kind of second Chaos: and leave a capacity for another World to rise from it. But that is not our present business. Let us onely, if you please, to take leave of this subject, reflect upon this occasion, on the Vanity and transient glory of all
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Chap. 12. Concerning the Conflagration.

111

this habitable World. How, by the force of one Element, breaking loose upon the rest, all the Varieties of Nature, all the works of Art, all the labours of Men are reduc'd to nothing. All that we admir'd and ador'd before, as great and magnificent, is obliterated or vanish'd. And another form and face of things, plain, simple, and every where the same, overspreads the whole Earth. Where are now the great Empires of the World, and their great Imperial Cities? Their Pillars, Trophees, and Monuments of glory? Show me where they stood: read the Inscription, tell me the Victor's name. What remains, what impressions, what difference or distinction do you see in this mass of fire? *Rome* it self, *Eternal Rome*, the Great City, the Empress of the World, whose domination and superstition, *ancient and modern*, make a great part of the history of this Earth: What is become of her now? She laid her foundations deep, and her Palaces were strong and sumptuous: *She glorified her self, and liv'd deliciously: and said in her heart, I sit a Queen, and shall see no sorrow.* But her hour is come, she is wip'd away from the face of the Earth, and buried in everlasting oblivion. But 'tis not Cities onely, and works of men's hands, but the everlasting Hills, the Mountains and Rocks of the Earth, are melted as Wax before the Sun; and *their place is no where found.* Here stood the *Alpes*, a prodigious range of Stone, the Load of the Earth, that cover'd many Countries, and reach'd their armes from the Ocean to the *Black Sea*; This huge mass of Stone is soften'd and dissolv'd, as a tender Cloud into rain. Here stood the *African* Mountains, and *Atlas* with his top above the Clouds. There was frozen *Caucasus*, and *Taurus*, and *Imaus*, and the Mountains of *Asia*. And yonder towards the North stood the *Riphaean* Hills, cloath'd in Ice and Snow. All these are vanish'd, dropt away as the Snow upon their heads: and swallowed up in a red Sea of fire. *Great and marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty: Just and true are thy ways, Thou King of Saints.* *Hallelujah.* Revel. 15. 3.

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THE CONCLUSION.

IF the Conflagration of the World be a reality, as, both by Scripture and Antiquity, we are assur'd it is: If we be fully perswaded and convinc'd of this: 'Tis a thing of that nature, that we cannot keep it long in our thoughts, without making some moral reflections upon it. 'Tis both great in it self, and of universal concern to all Mankind. Who can look upon such an Object, *A World in Flames*, without thinking with himself, Whether shall I be in the midst of these flames, or no? What is my security that I shall not fall under this fiery vengeance, which is the wrath of an angry God? St. Peter, when he had deliver'd the doctrine of the Conflagration, makes this pious reflection upon it: *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolv'd, what manner of persons ought you to be, in holy conversation and godliness?* The strength of his argument depends chiefly upon what he had said before in the 7th. Verse, where he told us, that the *present Heavens and Earth were reserv'd unto fire, against the Day of Judgment, and the perdition of irreligious men.* We must avoid the crime then, if we would escape the punishment. But this expression of *irreligious* or *ungodly men*, is still very general. St. Paul, when he speaks of this fiery indignation, and the Persons it is to fall upon, is more distinct in their characters. He seems to mark out for this destruction, three sorts of men chiefly, *The Atheists, Infidels, and the Tribe of Anti-christ.* These are his words: *When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God: and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Then as for Anti-christ and his adherents, he says, in the 2d. Chapt. and 8th. Verse, *The Lord shall consume that Wicked one with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of his coming, or of his Presence.* These, you see, all refer to the same time with St. Peter: namely, to the coming of our Saviour,

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at the Conflagration; and three sorts of Persons are characteriz'd as his Enemies, and set out for destruction at that time. First, those that know not God: that is, that acknowledge not God, that will not own the Deity. Secondly, those that hearken not to the Gospel; that is, that reject the Gospel and Christian Religion, when they are preach'd and made known to them. For you must not think that it is the poor barbarous and ignorant Heathens, that scarce ever heard of God, or the Gospel, that are threaten'd with this fiery vengeance. No, 'tis the Heathens that live amongst Christians; those that are Infidels, as to the existence of God, or the truth of Christian Religion, tho' they have had a full manifestation of both. These are properly the Adversaries of God and Christ. And such adversaries, St. Paul says in another place, *A fearful judgment, and fiery indignation shall devour:* which Heb. 10. 27. still refers to the same time, and the same Persons we are speaking of. Then as to the third sort of Men, Anti-christ and his Followers, besides this Text of St. Paul to the *Thessalonians*, 'tis plain to me in the Apocalypse, that *Mystical Babylon* is to be consum'd by fire: and the *Beast* and *False Prophet* to be thrown into the *Lake that burns with fire and brimstone*: Which Lake is no where to be found till the Conflagration.

You see then for whom *Tophet* is prepar'd of old. For Atheists, Infidels, and Anti-christian Persecutors. And they will have for their Companions, the Devil and his Angels, the heads of the Apostasie. These are all in open rebellion against God and Christ, and at defiance, as it were, with Heaven. Excepting Anti-christ, who is rather in a secret conspiracy, than an open rebellion. For, under a pretended Commission from Jesus Christ, He persecutes his Servants, dishonours his Person, corrupts his Laws and his Government, and makes War against his Saints. And this is a greater affront and provocation, if possible, than a bare-fac'd opposition would be.

There are other Men, besides these, that are unacceptable to God: All sorts of sinners and wicked persons: but they are not so properly the Enemies of God; as these we have mention'd. An intemperate Man is

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an Enemy to himself, and an unjust Man is an Enemy to his Neighbour : But those that deny God, or Christ, or persecute their Servants, are directly and immediately Enemies to God. And therefore when the Lord comes in flames of fire to triumph over his Enemies : To take vengeance upon all that are Rebels or Conspirators against him and his Christ; these Monsters of Men will be the first and most exemplary Objects of the divine wrath and indignation.

To undertake to speak to these three Orders of men, and convince them of their error, and the danger of it, would be too much for the Conclusion of a short Treatise. And as for the third sort, the Subjects of Antichrist, none but the Learned amongst them are allow'd to be inquisitive, or to read such things as condemn their Church, or the Governors of it. Therefore I do not expect that this English Translation should fall into many of their hands. But those of them, that are pleas'd to look into the Latin, will find, in the Conclusion of it, a full and fair warning to come out of *Babylon*: which is there prov'd to be the Church of *Rome*. Then as to those that are Atheistically inclin'd, which I am willing to believe are not many, I desire them to consider, How mean a thing it is, to have hopes onely in this Life : and how uneasie a thing, to have nothing but fears as to the Future. Those, sure, must be little narrow Souls, that can make themselves a portion and a sufficiency out of what they enjoy here : That think of no more, that desire no more. For what is this life, but a circulation of little mean actions ? We lie down and rise again : dress and undress : feed and wax hungry : work, or play, and are weary : and then we lie down again, and the circle returns. We spend the day in trifles, and when the Night comes, we throw our selves into the Bed of folly, amongst dreams and broken thoughts and wild imaginations. Our reason lies a-sleep by us ; and we are, for the time, as arrant Brutes, as those that sleep in the Stalls, or in the Field. Are not the Capacities of Man higher than these ? and ought not his ambition and expectations to be greater ? Let us be Adventurers for another World : 'Tis, at least, a fair and

and noble Chance: and there is nothing in this, worth our thoughts or our passions. If we should be disappointed, we are still no worse than the rest of our fellow-mortals: and if we succeed in our expectations, we are eternally happy.

For my part, I cannot be perswaded, that any man of Atheistical inclinations can have a great and generous Soul. For there is nothing great in the World, if you take God out of it. Therefore such a person can have no great thought, can have no great aims, or expectations, or designs: for all must lie within the compass of this Life, and of this dull Body. Neither can he have any great instincts or noble passions: For if he had, they would naturally excite in him greater Ideas, inspire him with higher notions, and open the Scenes of the Intellectual World. Lastly, He cannot have any great sense of Order, Wisdom, Goodness, Providence, or any of the Divine Perfections. And these are the greatest things that can enter into the thoughts of man, and that do most enlarge and ennoble his mind. And therefore I say again, That, He that is naturally inclined to Atheism, being also naturally destitute of all these, must have a little and narrow soul.

But you'll say, it may be, This is to expostulate rather than to prove: or to upbraid us with our make and temper, rather than to convince us of an error in speculation. 'Tis an error it may be in practice, or in point of prudence; but we seek Truth, whether it make for us or against us: convince us therefore by just reasoning and direct arguments, that there is a God, and then we'll endeavour to correct these defects in our natural complexion. You say well; and therefore I have endeavour'd to do this before, in another part of this Theory, in the *Second Book, ch. 11. Concerning the Author of Nature*: where you may see, that the Powers of Nature, or of the Material World, cannot answer all the Phænomena of the Universe, which are there represented. This you may consult at leisure. But, in the mean time, 'tis a good perswasive why we should not easily give our selves up to such inclinations or opinions, as have

neither generosity, nor prudence on their side. And it cannot be amiss, that these persons should often take into their thoughts, this last scene of things, *The Conflagration of the World*. Seeing if there be a God, they will certainly be found in the number of his Enemies, and of those that will have their portion in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone.

The Third sort of persons that we are to speak to, are the Incredulous, or such as do not believe the truth of *Christian Religion*, tho' they believe there is a God. These are commonly men of Wit and Pleasure, that have not patience enough to consider, coolly and in due order, the grounds upon which it appears, that Christian Religion is from Heaven, and of Divine Authority. They ought, in the first place, to examine *matter of Fact*, and the History of our Saviour: That there was such a Person, in the Reigns of *Augustus* and *Tiberius*, that wrought such and such Miracles in *Judæa*; taught such a Doctrine: was Crucified at *Jerusalem*: rise from the dead the Third Day, and visibly ascended into Heaven. If these matters of Fact be denied, then the controversy turns only to an Historical question, *Whether* the Evangelical History be a fabulous, or true History: which it would not be proper to examine in this place. But if matter of Fact recorded there, and in the Acts of the Apostles, and the first Ages of Christianity, be acknowledged, as I suppose it is, then the Question that remains is this, *Whether* such matter of Fact does not sufficiently prove the divine authority of Jesus Christ and of his Doctrine. We suppose it possible, for a person to have such Testimonials of divine authority, as may be sufficient to convince Mankind, or the more reasonable part of Mankind; And if that be possible, what, pray, is a wanting in the Testimonies of Jesus Christ? The Prophecies of the Old Testament bear witness to him: His Birth was a miracle, and his Life a train of Miracles: not wrought out of levity and vain ostentation, but for useful and charitable purposes. His Doctrine and Morality not only blameless, but Noble: designed to
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remove out of the World the imperfect Religion of the *Jews*, and the false Religion of the *Gentiles*: All Idolatry and Superstition: and thereby to improve Mankind, under a better and more perfect dispensation. He gave an example of a spotless innocency in all his Conversation, free from Vice or any evil; and liv'd in a neglect of all the Pomp or Pleasures of this Life, referring his happiness wholly to another World. He Prophefied concerning his own Death, and his Resurrection: and concerning the destruction of *Jerusalem*: which all came to pass in a signal manner. He also Prophefied of the Success of his Gospel: which, after his Death, immediately took root, and spread it self every way throughout the World: maugre all opposition or persecution, from *Jews* or *Heathens*. It was not supported by any temporal power for above three hundred Years: nor were any arts us'd, or measures taken, according to humane prudence, for the conservation of it. But, to omit other things, That grand article of his Rising from the Dead, Ascending visibly into Heaven, and pouring down the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost, (according as he had promis'd) upon his Apostles and their followers: This alone is to me a Demonstration of his Divine Authority. To conquer Death: To mount, like an Eagle, into the Skies: and to inspire his followers with inimitable gifts and faculties, are things, without controverfie, beyond all humane power: and may and ought be esteemed sure Credentials of a person sent from Heaven.

From these matters of Fact we have all possible assurance, that Jesus Christ was no Impostor or deluded person: (one of which two Characters all unbelievers must fix upon him) but Commission'd by Heaven to introduce a New Religion: to reform the World: to remove Judaism and Idolatry; The Beloved Son of God, the great Prophet of the latter Ages, the True Messiah that was to come.

It may be you will confess, that these are great arguments that the Author of our Religion was a Divine Person, and had supernatural powers: but withal, that there are so many difficulties in Christian Reli-

Religion, and so many things unintelligible, that a rational man knows not how to believe it, tho' he be inclin'd to admire the person of Jesus Christ. I answer, If they be such difficulties as are made only by the Schools and disputacious Doctors, you are not to trouble your self about them, for they are of no Authority. But if they be in the very words of Scripture, then 'tis either in things practical, or in things meerly speculative. As to the Rules of Practice in Christian Religion, I do not know any thing in Scripture, obscure or unintelligible. And as to Speculations, great discretion and moderation is to be us'd in the conduct of them. If these matters of Fact, which we have alledg'd, prove the Divinity of the Revelation, keep close to the Words of that Revelation, asserting no more than it asserts, and you cannot err. But if you will expatiate, and determine modes, and forms, and consequences; you may easily be puzzled by your own forwardness. For besides some things that are, in their own nature, Infinite and Incomprehensible, there are many other things in Christian Religion that are incompleatly reveal'd; the full knowledge whereof, it has pleased God to reserve to another life, and to give us only a summary account of them at present. We have so much deference for any Government, as not to expect that all their Councils and secrets should be made known to us, nor to censure every action whose reasons we do not fully comprehend; much more in the Providential administration of a World, we must be content to know so much of the Councils of Heaven and of supernatural Truths, as God has thought fit to reveal to us. And if these Truths be no otherwise than in a general manner, summarily and incompleatly revealed in this life, as commonly they are, we must not therefore throw off the Government, or reject the whole Dispensation: of whose Divine Authority we have otherways full proof and satisfactory evidence. For this would be, To lose the Substance in catching at a Shadow.

But

But Men that live continually in the noise of the World, amidst business and pleasures, their time is commonly shar'd betwixt those two. So that little or nothing is left for Meditation; at least, not enough for such Meditations as require length, justness, and order. They should retire from the crowd for one Month or two, to study the truth of Christian Religion, if they have any doubt of it. They retire sometimes to cure a Gout, or other Diseases, and diet themselves according to rule: but they will not be at that pains, to cure a disease of the mind, which is of far greater and more fatal consequence. If they perish by their own negligence or obstinacy, the Physician is not to blame. Burning is the last remedy in some distempers: and they would do well to remember, that the World will flame about their heads one of these days: and whether they be amongst the Living, or amongst the Dead, at that time, the Apostle makes them a part of the Fewel, which that fiery vengeance will prey upon. Our Saviour hath been true to his word hitherto: whether in his promises, or in his threatnings; He promis'd the Apostles to send down the Holy Ghost upon them after his Ascension, and that was fully accomplish'd. He foretold and threaten'd the destruction of *Jerusalem*: and that came to pass accordingly, soon after he had left the World. And he hath told us also, that he will come again in the Clouds of Heaven, with power and great glory; and that will be to judge the World. *When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the Throne of his glory. And before him shall be gather'd all Nations, and he will separate the good from the bad; and to the wicked and unbelievers he will say, Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* This is the same Coming, and the same Fire, with that which we mention'd before out of *St. Paul*. As you will plainly see, if you compare *St. Matthew's* words with *St. Paul's*, which are these, *When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty Angels: In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that hearken not to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall*

*Matt. 24.30.
& 25.31, &c.*

Ver. 41.

*2 Thess. i.
7, 8, 9.*

shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from, or by the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power. This, me-thinks, should be an awakening thought, that there is such a threatening upon record, (by one who never yet fail'd in his word) against those that do not believe his Testimony. Those that reject him now as a Dupe, or an Impostor, run a hazard of seeing him hereafter coming in the Clouds to be their Judge. And it will be too late then to correct their errour, when the bright Armies of Angels fill the Air, and the Earth begins to melt at the Presence of the Lord.

Thus much concerning those three ranks of Men, whom the Apostle *St. Paul* seems to point at principally, and condemn to the flames. But, as I said before, the rest of sinners and vicious Persons amongst the Professors of Christianity, tho' they are not so directly the Enemies of God, as these are; yet being transgressors of his Law, they must expect to be brought to Justice. In every well-govern'd State, not onely Traitors and Rebels, that offend more immediately against the Person of the Prince, but all others, that notoriously violate the Laws, are brought to condign punishment, according to the nature and degree of their crime. So in this case, *The fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is.* 'Tis therefore the concern of every man to reflect often upon that Day, and to consider what his fate and sentence is likely to be, at that last Trial. The *Jews* have a Tradition that *Elias* sits in Heaven, and keeps a Register of all Mens actions, good or bad. He hath his Under-Secretaries for the several Nations of the World, that take minutes of all that passes: and so hath the history of every man's life before him, ready to be produc'd at the Day of Judgment. I will not vouch for the literal truth of this, but it is true in effect. Every man's fate shall be determin'd that Day, according to the history of his life: according to the works done in the flesh, whether good or bad. And therefore it ought to have as much influence upon us, as if every single action was formally register'd in Heaven.

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If Men would learn to condemn this World, it would cure a great many Vices at once. And, methinks, St. Peter's argument, from the approaching dissolution of all things, should put us out of conceit with such perishing vanities. Lust and Ambition are the two reigning Vices of great Men: and those little fires might be soon extinguish'd, if they would frequently and seriously meditate on this last and universal Fire; which will put an end to all passions and all contentions. As to Ambition, the Heathens themselves made use of this argument, to abate and repress the vain affectation of glory and greatness in this World. I told you before the lesson that was given to *Scipio Africanus*, by his Uncle's Ghost, upon this Subject. And upon a like occasion and consideration, *Cæsar* hath a lesson given him by *Lucan*, after the Battle of *Pharsalia*; where *Pompey* lost the day, and *Rome* its liberty. The Poet says, *Cæsar* took pleasure in looking upon the dead Bodies, and would not suffer them to be buried, or, which was their manner of burying, to be burnt. Whereupon he speaks to Him in these words:

P. 15.

*Hos, Cæsar, populos si nunc non ufferit Ignis,
Uret cum Terris, uret cum gurgite Ponti.
Communis mundo superest Rogus, Ossibus astra
Misturus. Quocunque Tuam Fortuna vocabit,
Hæ quoque eunt Animæ; non altiùs ibis in auras;
Non meliore loco Stygiâ sub nocte jacebis.
Liberâ fortuna Mors est: Capit omnia Tellus
Quæ genuit: Cælo tegitur Qui non habet urnam.*

Cæsar,

*If now these Bodies want their fire and urn,
At last, with the whole Globe, they'l surely burn.
The World expects one general Fire: and Thou
Must go where these poor Souls are wand'ring now:
Thou'l reach no higher, in th' Ethereal plain,
Nor 'mongst the shades a better place obtain.
Death equals all: And He that has not room
To make a Grave, Heav'n's Vault shall be his Tomb.*

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These are mortifying thoughts to ambitious Spirits. And surely our own Mortality, and the Mortality of the World it self, may be enough to convince all considering Men, That, *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity under the Sun*: any otherwise than as they relate to a better Life.

F I N I S.

THE
THEORY
OF THE
EARTH:

Containing an Account
OF THE
Original of the Earth,
AND OF ALL THE
GENERAL CHANGES
Which it hath already undergone,
OR
IS TO UNDERGO,
Till the CONSUMMATION of all Things.

THE FOURTH BOOK,
Concerning the NEW HEAVENS and NEW EARTH,
AND
Concerning the CONSUMMATION of all Things.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *R. Norton*, for *Walter Kettilby*, at the Bishop's-
Head in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*. 1690.

THE
T H E O R Y
OF THE
F A R T H
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AND OF ALL THE
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Which it hath already undergone,
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OF THE
FOURTH BOOK
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OF THE
LIFE
AND
DEATH
OF THE
SOULS
OF THE
JUST
AND
UNJUST
AND
THE
REWARD
AND
PUNISHMENT
OF THE
SAME.

P R E F A C E
T O T H E
R E A D E R

YOU see it is still my lot, to travel into New Worlds: having never found any great satisfaction in this. As an active people leaves their habitations in a barren soil, to try if they can make their fortune better elsewhere. I first lookt backwards, and waded through the Deluge, into the Primæval World: to see how they liv'd there, and how Nature stood in that original constitution. Now I am going forwards, to view the New Heavens and New Earth, that will be after the Conflagration. But, Gentle Reader, let me not take you any further, if you be weary. I do not love a querulous Companion. Unless your Genius therefore press you forwards, chuse rather to rest here, and be content with that part of the Theory which you have seen already. Is it not fair, to have followed Nature so far as to have seen her twice in her ruines? Why should we still pursue her, even after death and dissolution, into dark and remote Futurities? To whom therefore such disquisitions seem needless, or over-curious, let them rest here; and leave the remainder of this Work, which is a PROPHECY concerning the STATE of things after the Conflagration, to those that are of a disposition suited to such studies and enquiries.

Not that any part of this Theory requires much Learning, Art, or Science, to be Master of it; But a love and thirst after Truth, freedom of Judgment, and a resignation of our Understandings to clear Evidence, let it carry us which way it will. An honest English Reader that looks only at the Sence as it lies before him, and neither considers nor cares whether it be New or Old, so it be true, may be a more competent Judge than a great Scholar full of his own Notions, and puff'd up with the opinion of his mighty knowledge. For such men think they cannot in honour

P R E F A C E

own any thing to be true, which they did not know before. To be taught any new knowledge, is to confess their former ignorance; and that lessens them in their own opinion, and, as they think, in the opinion of the World; which are both uneasie reflections to them. Neither must we depend upon age only for soundness of Judgment: We seldom change our Opinions after threescore: especially if they be leading Opinions. It is then too late, we think, to begin the World again; and as we grow old, the Heart contracts, and cannot open wide enough to take in a great thought.

The Spheres of mens Understandings are as different, as Prospects upon the Earth. Some stand upon a Rock or a Mountain, and see far round about; Others are in an hollow, or in a Cave, and have no prospect at all. Some men consider nothing but what is present to their Senses: Others extend their thoughts both to what is past and what is future. And yet the fairest prospect in this Life is not to be compar'd to the least we shall have in another. Our clearest day here, is misty and hazy: We see not far, and what we do see is in a bad light. But when we have got better Bodies in the first Resurrection, whereof we are going to Treat; better Senses and a better Understanding, a clearer light and an higher station, our Horizon will be enlarg'd every way, both as to the Natural World and as to the Intellectual.

Two of the greatest Speculations that we are capable of in this Life, are, in my Opinion, The REVOLUTION OF WORLDS, and the REVOLUTION OF SOULS; one for the Material World, and the other for the Intellectual. Toward the former of these Our Theory is an Essay: and in this our Planet, (which I hope to conduct into a Fix'd Star, before I have done with it) we give an instance of what may be in other Planets. 'Tis true, we took our rise no higher than the Chaos: because that was a known principle, and we were not willing to amuse the Reader with too many strange Stories: as that, I am sure, would have been thought one, TO HAVE brought this Earth from a Fix'd Star, and then carried it up again into the same Sphere. Which yet I believe, is the true circle of Natural Providence.

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To the R E A D E R.

As to the Revolution of Souls, the footsteps of that Speculation are more obscure than of the former. For tho' we are assur'd by Scripture, that all good Souls will at length have Celestial Bodies; yet, that this is a returning to a Primitive State, or to what they had at their first Creation, that, Scripture has not acquainted us with. It tells us indeed that Angels fell from their Primitive Celestial Glory; and consequently we might be capable of a lapse as well as they, if we had been in that high condition with them. But that we ever were there, is not declared to us by any revelation. Reason and Morality would indeed suggest to us, that an innocent Soul, fresh and pure from the hands of its Maker, could not be immediately cast into Prison, before it had, by any act of its own Will, or any use of its own Understanding, committed either error or sin. I call this Body a Prison, both because it is a confinement and restraint upon our best Faculties and Capacities, and is also the seat of diseases and loathsomeness; and, as prisons use to do, commonly tends more to debauch mens Natures, than to improve them.

But tho' we cannot certainly tell under what circumstances humane Souls were plac'd at first, yet all Antiquity agrees, Oriental and Occidental, concerning their pre-existence in general, in respect of these mortal Bodies. And our Saviour never reproaches or corrects the Jews, when they speak upon that supposition, Luk. 9. 18, 19. Joh. 9. 2. Besides, it seems to me beyond all controversie, that the Soul of the Messiah did exist before the Incarnation, ^{Joh. 3. 13. & 6. 38. & 62. & 17. 5.} and voluntarily descended from Heaven to take upon it a Mortal Body. And tho' it does not appear that all humane Souls were at first plac'd in Glory, yet, from the example of our Saviour, we see something greater in them: Namely, a capacity to be united to the Godhead. And what is possible to one, is possible to more. But these thoughts are too high for us: while we find our selves united to nothing, but diseased bodies and houses of clay.

The greatest fault we can commit in such Speculations, is to be over-positive and Dogmatical. To be inquisitive into the ways of Providence and the works of God, is so far from being a fault, that it is our greatest perfection; We cultivate the highest principles and best inclinations of our Nature, while we are thus employ'd: and 'tis little-
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ness or secularity of Spirit, that is the greatest Enemy to Contemplation. Those that would have a true contempt of this World, must suffer the Soul to be sometimes upon the Wing, and to raise her self above the sight of this little dark Point, which we now inhabit. Give her a large and free prospect of the immensity of God's works, and of his inexhausted wisdom and goodness, if you would make her Great and Good. As the Poet said in his Rapture,

Give me a Soul so great, so high,
Let her dimensions stretch the Skie.
That comprehends within a thought,
The whole extent 'twixt God and Nought.
And from the World's first birth and date,
Its Life and Death can calculate:
With all th' adventures that shall pass,
To ev'ry Atome of the Mass.

But let Her be as GOOD as GREAT,
Her highest Throne a Mercy-Seat.
Soft and dissolving like a Cloud,
Losing her self in doing good.
A Cloud that leaves its place above,
Rather than dry, and useless move:
Falls in a showre upon the Earth,
And gives ten thousand Seeds a birth.
Hangs on the Flow'rs, and infant Plants,
Sucks not their Sweets, but feeds their Wants.
So let this mighty Mind diffuse
All that's her own to others use;
And free from private ends, retain
Nothing of SELF, but a bare Name.

THE
THEORY
OF THE
EARTH.

BOOK IV.

Concerning the new Heavens and new Earth,
AND
Concerning the Consummation of all things.

CHAP. I.

THE INTRODUCTION.

That the World will not be annihilated in the last Fire. That we are to expect, according to Scripture and the Christian doctrine, New Heavens and a new Earth, when these are dissolv'd or burnt up.



WE are now so far advanc'd in the Theory of the Earth, as to have seen the End of two Worlds: One destroy'd by Water, and another by Fire. It remains onely to consider, whether we be yet come to the final period of Nature:

The last Scene of all things, and consequently the utmost bound of our enquiries. Or, whether Providence, which is inexhausted in wisdom and goodness, will raise up, from this dead Mass, New Heavens and

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a New Earth. Another habitable World, better and more perfect than that which was destroyed. That, as the first World began with a Paradise, and a state of Innocency, so the last may be a kind of Renovation of that happy state; whose Inhabitants shall not die, but be translated to a blessed Immortality.

I know 'tis the opinion of some, that this World will be annihilated, or reduc'd to nothing, at the Conflagration: and that would put an end to all further enquiries. But whence do they learn this? from Scripture, or Reason, or their own imagination? What instance or example can they give us, of this they call *Annihilation*? Or what place of Scripture can they produce, that says the World, in the last Fire, shall be reduc'd to nothing? If they have neither instance, nor proof of what they affirm, 'tis an empty Imagination of their own: neither agreeable to Philosophy, nor Divinity. Fire does not consume any substance: It changes the form and qualities of it, but the matter remains. And if the design had been *Annihilation*, the employing of fire would have been of no use or effect. For smoak and ashes are at as great a distance from *Nothing*, as the bodies themselves out of which they are made. But these Authors seem to have but a small tincture of Philosophy, and therefore it will be more proper to confute their opinion from the words of Scripture; which hath left us sufficient evidence, that another World will succeed after the Conflagration of that we now inhabit.

The Prophets, both of the Old and New Testament, have left us their predictions concerning *New Heavens and a New Earth*. So says the Prophet *Isaiah*, ch. 65. 17. *Behold I create New Heavens and a New Earth, and the former shall not be remembred, or come into mind.* As not worthy our thoughts, in comparison of those that will arise when these pass away. So the Prophet *S. John*, in his *Apocalypse*, when he was come to the end of this World, says, *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more Sea.* Where he does not only give us an account

account of a New Heaven and a New Earth, in general: but also gives a distinctive character of the *New Earth*: that it shall have *no Sea*. And in the 5th ver. He that sat upon the Throne, says, *Behold I make all things New*; which, consider'd with the antecedents and consequents, cannot be otherwise understood than of a New World.

But some men make evasions here as to the words of the Prophets; and say they are to be understood in a figurate and allegorical sence: and to be applyed to the times of the Gospel, either at first or towards the latter end of the World. So as this *New Heaven and New Earth* signifie only a great change in the moral World. But how can that be, seeing *S. John* places them after the end of the World: and the Prophet *Isaiah* connects such things with his New Heavens and New Earth, as are not competible to the present state of Nature? However to avoid all shuffling and tergiversation in this point, let us appeal to *S. Peter*, who uses a plain literal style, and discourses down-right concerning the Natural World. In his 2d Epist. and 3d chap. when he had foretold and explained the Future Conflagration, he adds, But we expect *New Heavens and a New Earth according to his promises*. These Promises were made by the Prophets: and this gives us full authority to interpret their *New Heavens and New Earth* to be after the Conflagration. *S. Peter*, when he had describ'd the Dissolution of the World in the last Fire, in full and emphatical terms, as *the passing away of the Heavens with a noise: the melting of the Elements, and burning up all the works of the Earth*: he subjoyns, *Nevertheless, notwithstanding this total dissolution of the present World, We, according to his promises, look for new heavens and a new earth: wherein dwelleth Righteousness*. As if the Apostle should have said, Notwithstanding this strange and violent dissolution of the present Heavens and Earth, which I have described to you, we do not at all distrust God's Promises concerning New Heavens and a New Earth, that are to succeed these, and to be the seat of the Righteous.

ch. 65.

Here's no room for Allegories or allegorical expositions: unless you will make the Conflagration of the World an Allegory. For, as Heavens and Earth were destroy'd, so Heavens and Earth are restored: and if in the first place you understand the natural material World, you must also understand it in the second place: They are both Allegories, or neither. But to make the Conflagration an Allegory, is not only to contradict *S. Peter*, but all Antiquity, Sacred or Prophane. And I desire no more assurance that we shall have New Heavens and a New Earth, in a literal Sence, than we have that the present Heavens and Earth shall be destroyed in a literal Sence, and by material Fire. Let it therefore rest upon that issue, as to this first evidence and argument from Scripture.

Some will fancy, it may be, that we shall have New Heavens and Earth, and yet that these shall be annihilated; They would have These first reduc'd to nothing, and then others created, spick and span New, out of nothing. But why so, pray, what's the humour of that? lest Omnipotency should want employment, you would have it do, and undo, and do again. As if new-made Matter, like new Clothes, or new Furniture, had a better Gloss, and was more creditable. Matter never wears: as fine Gold, melt it down never so often, it loses nothing of its quantity. The substance of the World is the same, burnt or unburnt: and is of the same Value and Virtue, New or Old: and we must not multiply the actions of Omnipotency without necessity. God does not make, or unmake things, to try experiments: He knows before hand the utmost capacities of every thing, and does no vain or superfluous work. Such imaginations as these proceed only from want of true Philosophy, or the true knowledge of the Nature of God and of his Works; which should always be carefully attended to, in such Speculations as concern the Natural World. But to proceed in our Subject.

If they suppose part of the World to be annihilated, and to continue so, they Philosophize still worse and worse. How high shall this Annihilation reach? Shall

Shall the Sun, Moon, and Stars be reduc'd to nothing? but what have They done, that they should undergo so hard a fate? must they be turn'd out of Being for our faults? The whole material Universe will not be Annihilated at this bout, for we are to have Bodies after the Resurrection, and to live in Heaven. How much of the Universe then will you leave standing: or how shall it subsist with this great *Vacuum* in the heart of it? This shell of a World is but the fiction of an empty Brain: For God and Nature in their works, never admit of such gaping vacuities and emptinesses.

If we consult Scripture again, we shall find that that makes mention of a *Restitution* and *Reviviscency* of all things: at the end of the World, or at the Coming of our Saviour. S. Peter, whose doctrine we have hitherto followed, in his Sermon to the Jews after our Saviour's Ascension, tells them that He will come again, and that there will be then a *Restitution of all things*: such as was promised by the Prophets. *The Heavens*, says he, *must receive him until the time of Restitution of all things: which God hath spoken by the mouth of his holy Prophets, since the world began.* If we compare this passage of S. Peter's, with that which we alledged before out of his second Epistle, it can scarce be doubted but that he refers to the same Promises in both places: and what he there calls a *New Heaven* and a *New Earth*, he calls here a *Restitution of all things*. For the Heavens and the Earth comprehend all, and both these are but different phrases for the Renovation of the World. This gives us also light how to understand what our Saviour calls the *Regeneration* or *Reviviscency*, when he shall sit upon his Throne of Glory, and will reward his followers an hundred fold, for all their losses in this World: besides Everlasting Life as the Crown of all. I know, in our English Translation, we separate the *Regeneration* from *sitting upon his Throne*: but without any warrant from the Original. And seeing our Saviour speaks here of Bodily goods, and seems to distinguish them from *everlasting life*, which is to be the final reward of his Followers, This *Regeneration* seems to belong

Act. 3.

ver. 21.

Matt. 19.
28, 29.

belong to his Second coming, when the World shall be renew'd or regenerated: and the Righteous shall possess the Earth.

Other places of Scripture that foretel the fate of this material World, represent it always as a *Change*, not as an *Annihilation*. St. Paul says, *The Figure of this World passes away*: 1 Cor. 7. 31. The form, fashion, and disposition of its parts: but the substance still remains. As a Body that is melted down and dissolv'd, the Form perishes, but the Matter is not destroy'd. And the Psalmist says, The Heavens and the Earth shall be *chang'd*: which answers to this Transformation we speak of. The same Apostle, in the Eighth Chapter to the *Romans*, shows also that this *change* shall be, and shall be for the better: and calls it a *Deliverance of the Creation from vanity and corruption*: and a participation of the *glorious liberty of the Children of God*. Being a sort of *Redemption*, as they have a *Redemption of their Bodies*.

Psal. 102. 26.

*Ver. 21, 22,
23, 24.*

But, seeing the *Renovation* of the World is a Doctrine generally receiv'd, both by ancient and modern Authors, as we shall have occasion to show hereafter: We need add no more, in this place, for confirmation of it. Some Men are willing to throw all things into a state of *Nothing* at the Conflagration, and bury them there, that they may not be oblig'd to give an account of that state of things, that is to succeed it. Those who think themselves bound in honour, to know every thing in Theology that is knowable: and find it uneasy to answer such questions and speculations, as would arise upon their admitting a new World, think it more adviseable to stifle it in the birth, and so to bound all knowledge at the Conflagration. But surely, so far as Reason or Scripture lead us, we may and ought to follow: otherwise we should be ungrateful to Providence, that sent us those Guides. Provided, we be always duly sensible of our own weakness: and, according to the difficulty of the subject, and the measure of light that falls upon it, proceed with that modesty and ingenuity, that becomes such fallible enquirers after Truth, as we are. And this rule I desire to prescribe to my self, as in all others

others Writings, so especially in this: where, tho' I look upon the principal Conclusions as fully prov'd, there are several particulars, that are rather propos'd to examination, than positively asserted.

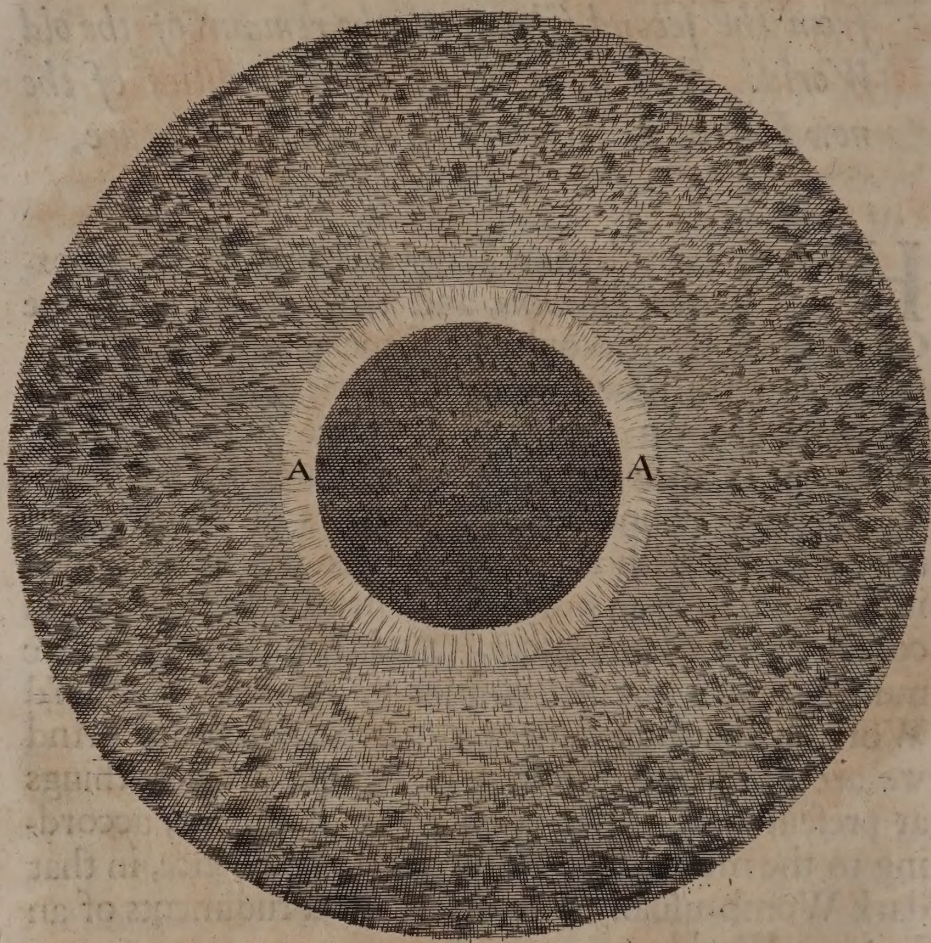
CHAP. II.

The Birth of the new Heavens and the new Earth, from the second Chaos, or the remains of the old World. The form, order, and qualities of the new Earth, according to Reason and Scripture.

HAVING prov'd from Scripture, that we are to expect *New Heavens*, and a *New Earth*, after the Conflagration; it would be some pleasure and satisfaction to see how this new Frame will arise: and what foundation there is in Nature for the accomplishment of these promises. For, tho' the Divine Power be not bound to all the Laws of Nature, but may dispence with them when there is a necessity; yet it is an ease to us in our belief, when we see them both conspire in the same effect. And in order to this, we must consider in what posture we left the demolish'd World: what hopes there is of a Restauration. And we are not to be discourag'd, because we see things at present wrapt up in a confus'd Mass: for, according to the methods of Nature and Providence, in that dark Womb usually are the seeds and rudiments of an Embryo-World.

Neither is there, possibly, so great a confusion in this Mass, as we imagine. The Heart and interiour Body of the Earth is still entire: and that part of it that is consum'd by the fire, will be divided, of its own accord, into two Regions. What is dissolv'd and melted, being the heaviest, will descend as low as it can: and cover and enclose the kernel of the Earth round about, as a molten Sea or Abyss: according as
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is explain'd and set down in the precedent Book. But what is more light and volatile, will float in the Air: as fumes, smoak, exhalations, vapours of Water, and whatsoever terrestrial parts can be elevated and supported by the strength of fire. These all mingled together, of different sizes, figures, and motions, will constitute an opake Cloud, or thick region of darkness round the Earth: So as the Globe of the Earth, with its Atmosphere, after the Conflagration is finish'd, will stand in the form represented in this Scheme.



Now as to the lower of these two regions, the region of melted matter, A. A. we shall have little occasion to take notice of it: seeing it will contribute nothing to the formation of the new World. But the upper region, or all above that Orb of fire, is the true draught of a Chaos: or a mixture and confusion of all

all the Elements, without order or distinction. Here are particles of Earth, and of Air, and of Water, all promiscuously jumbled together, by the force and agitation of the fire. But when that force ceases, and every one is left to its own inclination, they will, according to their different degrees of gravity, separate and sort themselves after this manner. First, the heaviest and grossest parts of the Earth will subside; then the watery parts will follow; then a lighter sort of Earth; which will stop and rest upon the Surface of the Water, and compose there a thin film or membrane; this membrane or tender Orb is the first rudiment or foundation of a new habitable Earth. For according as terrestrial parts fall upon it, from all the regions and heights of the Atmosphere, or of the Chaos, this Orb will grow more firm, strong, and immoveable: able to support it self and Inhabitants too. And having in it all the Principles of a fruitful Soil, whether for the production of Plants or of Animals, it will want no property or character of an habitable Earth. And particularly, will become such an Earth, and of such a form, as the first Paradisiacal Earth was. Which hath been fully describ'd in the first and second Books of this Theory.

There is no occasion of examining more accurately the formation of this Second Earth, seeing it is so much the same with that of the First; which is set down fully and distinctly in the 5th. Chapter of the first Book of this Theory. Nature here repeats the same work, and in the same method; onely the materials are now a little more refin'd and purg'd by the fire. They both rise out of a Chaos, and That, in effect, the same in both cases; For though in forming the first Earth, I suppos'd the Chaos or confus'd Mass to reach down to the Center, I did that onely for the ease of our imagination; that so the whole Mass might appear more simple and uniform. But in reality, that Chaos had a solid kernel of Earth within, as this hath; and that matter which fluctuated above in the regions of the Air, was the true Chaos, whose parts, when they came to a separation, made the several Elements, and the form of an habitable Earth betwixt the Air and

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Water.

Water. This Chaos upon separation, will fall into the same form and Elements: and so in like manner create or constitute a second Paradisiacal World.

I say a *Paradisiacal* World: For it appears plainly, that this new-form'd Earth must agree with that *Primigenial* Earth, in the two principal and fundamental properties. First, It is of an even, entire, uniform and regular Surface, without Mountains or Sea. Secondly, That it hath a straight and regular situation to the Sun, and the *Axis* of the *Ecliptick*. From the manner of its formation, it appears manifestly, that it must be of an even and regular Surface. For the Orb of liquid fire, upon which the first descent was made, being smooth and uniform every where, the matter that fell upon it would take the same form and mould. And so the second or third Region, that were super-induc'd, would still imitate the fashion of the first: there being no cause or occasion of any inequality. Then as to the situation of its *Axis*, this uniformity of figure would determine the center of its gravity to be exactly in the middle, and consequently there would be no inclination of one Pole more than another to the general center of its motion; But, upon a free libration in the liquid Air, its *Axis* would lie parallel with the *Axis* of the *Ecliptick* where it moves. But these things having been deduc'd more fully in the second Book about *Paradise* and the *Primigenial Earth*, they need no further explication in this place.

If Scripture had left us several distinct Characters of the *New Heavens*, and the *New Earth*, we might, by compare with those, have made a full proof of our Hypothesis. One indeed St. *John* hath left us in very express terms, *There was no Sea there*, He says. His words are these: *And I saw a New Heaven, and a New Earth: for the first Heaven and the first Earth were passed away; AND THERE WAS NO MORE SEA.* This character is very particular, and you see it exactly answers to our Hypothesis: for in the new-form'd Earth, the Sea is cover'd and inconspicuous: being an Abyss, not a Sea; and wholly lodg'd in the Womb of the Earth. And this one Character, being inexplicable upon any other supposition, and very different

rent from the present Earth, makes it a strong presumption that we have hit upon the true model of the New Heavens and New Earth which *S. John* saw.

To this sight of the New Heavens and New Earth, *S. John* immediately subjoins the sight of the *New Jerusalem*, ver. 2. as being contemporary, and in some respects the same thing. 'Tis true, the Characters of the *New Jerusalem* in these two last Chapters of the *Apocalypse*, are very hard to be understood: some of them being incompatible to a *Terrestrial* state, and some of them to a *Celestial*; so as it seems to me very reasonable to suppose, that the *New Jerusalem* spoken of by *S. John*, is twofold: That which he saw himself, ver. 2. and that which the Angel shewed him afterwards, ver. 9. For I do not see what need there was of an Angel, and of taking him up into a great and high mountain, only to shew him that which he had seen before, at the foot of the Mountain. However we are to consider in this place the *Terrestrial New Jerusalem* only, or that which is in the New Heavens and New Earth. And as *S. John* hath joyned these two together, so the Prophet *Isaiah* had done the same thing before; when he had promised *new Heavens and a new Earth*, he calls them, under another name, *Jerusalem*: and they both use the same character in effect, in the description of their *Jerusalem*. *Isaiah* says, *And I will rejoyce in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.* *S. John* says also in his *Jerusalem*, *God shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people: And he shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.* Now in both these Prophets, when they treat upon this subject, we find they make frequent allusions to *Paradise* and a *Paradisiacal* state; so as that may be justly taken as a Scripture-Character of the *New Heavens and the New Earth*. The Prophet *Isaiah* seems plainly to point at a *Paradisiacal* state, throughout that Chapter, by an universal innocency, and harmlesness of animals; and peace, plenty, health, longevity or immortality of the inhabitants. *S. John* also hath several allusions to *Paradise*,

ch. 21. &
ch. 22.

dise, in those two Chapters where he describes the New Jerusalem. And in his discourse to the seven Churches, in one place (ch. 2. 7.) *To him that overcometh is promised to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.* And in another place (ch. 3. 12.) *to him that overcometh is promised, to have the name of the New Jerusalem writ upon him.* These I take to be the same thing, and the same reward of Christian Victors, The *New Jerusalem* or the New Heavens and New Earth, and the *Paradise of God.* Now this being the general Character of the New Earth, That it is *Paradisiacal*: and the particular Character, That it *hath no Sea*: and both these agreeing with our Hypothesis, as apparently deducible from those principles and that manner of its formation which we have set down: We cannot but allow, that the Holy Scriptures and the Natural Theory agree in their Testimony, as to the conditions and properties of the *New Heavens and New Earth.*

Τὴν οἰκουμένην
καὶ μέλλουσαν
πατὴρ τοῦ μέ-
λουτος αἰῶνος
Isa. 9. 6.

From what hath been said in this and the precedent Chapter, it will not be hard to interpret what S. Paul meant by his *Habitable Earth to come*: which is to be subjected to our Saviour and not to the Angels. In the second chapter to the *Hebrews*, ver. 5. he says, *For unto the Angels hath he not put in subjection the WORLD TO COME*: So we read it, but, according to the strictest and plainest Translation, it should be *The habitable Earth to come.* Now what Earth is this, where our Saviour is absolute Sovereign: and where the Government is neither Humane, nor Angelical, but peculiarly Theocratical? In the first place, this cannot be the present World or the present Earth, because the Apostle calls it *Future*, or the *Earth to come.* Nor can it be understood of the days of the Gospel: seeing the Apostle acknowledges, ver. 8. that this subjection, whereof he speaks, is not yet made. And seeing Antichrist will not finally be destroy'd till the appearance of our Saviour, (2 *Thess.* 2. 8.) nor Satan bound, while Antichrist is in power: during the reign of these two, (who are the Rulers of the darkness of the World) our Saviour cannot properly be said to begin his reign here. 'Tis true, He exercises his Providence

phes. 6. 12.

over

over his Church, and secures it from being destroy'd: He can, by a power paramount, stop the rage either of Satan or Antichrist; *Hitherto shall you go and no further.* As sometimes when he was upon Earth, he exerted a Divine Power, which yet did not destroy his state of Humiliation; so he interposes now when he thinks fit, but he does not finally take the power out of the hands of his Enemies, nor out of the hands of the Kings of the Earth. The Kingdom is not deliver'd up to him, and all dominion, and power; that all Tongues and Nations should serve him. For S. Paul can mean no less in this place than that Kingdom in Daniel: Seeing he calls it *putting all things in subjection under his feet*, and says that it is not yet done. Upon this account also, as well as others, our Saviour might truly say to Pilate (*Joh. 18. 36.*) *my kingdom is not of this World.* And to his Disciples, *The Son of man came not to be ministred unto, but to minister,* Matt. 20. 28. When he comes to receive his Kingdom, he comes in the clouds of Heaven (*Dan. 7. 13, 14.*) not in the womb of a Virgin. He comes with the equipage of a King and Conqueror; with thousands and ten thousands of Angels: not in the form of a Servant, or of a weak Infant; as he did at his first coming.

Neither can this *World to come*, or this *Earth to come*, be understood of the Kingdom of Heaven. For the Greek word will not bear that sense, nor is it ever us'd in Scripture for *Heaven*. Besides, the Kingdom of Heaven, when spoken of as *future*, is not properly till the last resurrection and final judgment. Whereas *This World to come*, which our Saviour is to govern, must be before that time, and will then expire. For all his Government, as to this World, expires at the day of Judgment, and *he will then deliver up the kingdom into the hands of his father: that he may be all in all.* Having reigned first himself, and put down all rule and all authority and power. So that S. Paul, in these two places of his Epistles, refers plainly to the same time and the same reign of Christ: which must be in a *future World*, and before the *day of Judgment*: and therefore according to our deductions, in the New Heavens and the New Earth.

C H A P. III.

Concerning the Inhabitants of the New Earth. That Natural Reason cannot determine this point. That according to Scripture; The Sons of the first Resurrection, or the Heirs of the Millennium, are to be the Inhabitants of the New Earth. The Testimony of the Philosophers, and of the Christian Fathers, for the Renovation of the World. The first Proposition laid down.

THUS we have settled the true notion, according to Reason and Scripture, of the *New Heavens* and *New Earth*. But where are the Inhabitants, you'll say? You have taken the pains to make us a New World, and now that it is made, it must stand empty. When the first World was destroyed, there were eight persons preserv'd, with a Set of living Creatures of every kind, as a Seminary or foundation of another World: But the Fire, it seems, is more merciless than the Water; for in this destruction of the World, it does not appear that there is one living Soul left, of any sort, upon the face of the Earth. No hopes of posterity, nor of any continuation of Mankind, in the usual way of propagation. And Fire is a barren Element, that breeds no living Creatures in it, nor hath any nourishment proper for their food or sustenance.

We are perfectly at a loss, therefore, so far as I see, for a new race of Mankind, or how to people this new-form'd World. The Inhabitants, if ever there be any, must either come from Heaven, or spring from the Earth: There are but these two ways. But *Natural Reason* can determine neither of these: sees no tract to follow in these unbeaten paths, nor can advance one step further. Farewel then, dear Friend, I must take another Guide: and leave you here, as *Moses* upon Mount *Pisgah*, only to look into that Land, which

which you cannot enter. I acknowledge the good service you have done, and what a faithful Companion you have been, in a long journey; from the beginning of the World to this hour, in a tract of time of six thousand years. We have travel'd together through the dark regions of a First and Second *Chaos*: seen the World twice shipwrackt. Neither Water, nor Fire, could separate us. But now you must give place to other Guides.

Welcome, *Holy Scriptures*, The Oracles of God, a Light shining in darkness, a Treasury of hidden knowledge, and, where *humane faculties* cannot reach, a seasonable help and supply to their defects. We are now come to the utmost bounds of their dominion: They have made us a New World, but, how it shall be inhabited, they cannot tell: know nothing of the History or affairs of it. This we must learn from other Masters, inspir'd with the knowledge of things to come. And such Masters we know none, but the holy Prophets and Apostles. We must therefore now put our selves wholly under their conduct and instruction, and from them only receive our information concerning the moral state of the future habitable Earth.

In the first place therefore, The Prophet *Isaiah* tells Isa. 45. 18. us, as a preparation to our further enquiries, *The Lord God created the Heavens, God himself that formed the Earth, He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.* This is true, both of the present Earth and the *Future*, and of every habitable World whatsoever. For to what purpose is it made habitable, if not to be inhabited? That would be, as if a man should manure, and plough, and every way prepare his ground for seed, but never sow it. We do not build houses that they should stand empty, but look out for Tenants as fast as we can; as soon as they are made ready, and become Tenantable. But if man could do things in vain and without use or design, yet God and Nature never do any thing *in vain*; much less so great a work as the making of a World. Which if it were in vain, would comprehend ten thousand vanities or useless preparations in it. We may therefore in the first place,

place, safely conclude, *That the New Earth will be inhabited.*

But *by whom will it be inhabited?* This makes the second enquiry. St. Peter answers this question for us, and with a particular application to this very subject of the New Heavens and New Earth. They shall be inhabited, he says, by the *Just* or the *Righteous*. His words, which we cited before, are these. When he had describ'd the Conflagration of the World, he adds, But we *expect new Heavens and a new Earth, WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS*. By *righteousness* here, it is generally agreed must be understood Righteous Persons. For Righteousness cannot be without righteous Persons: It cannot hang upon Trees, or grow out of the ground; 'Tis the endowment of reasonable Creatures. And these righteous Persons are eminently such, and therefore call'd Righteousness in the abstract, or purely righteous without mixture of Vice.

So we have found Inhabitants for the New Earth: Persons of an high and noble Character. Like those describ'd by St. Peter, (1 Epist. 2. 9.) *A chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People.* As if into that World, as into St. John's New Jerusalem, nothing impure or unrighteous was to be admitted. These being then the happy and holy Inhabitants: The next enquiry is, *Whence do they come?* From what off-spring, or from what Original? We noted before, that there was no remnant of Mankind left at the Conflagration, as there was at the Deluge: nor any hopes of a Restauration that way. Shall we then imagine that these new Inhabitants are a Colony waisted over from some neighbouring World: as from the Moon, or Mercury, or some of the higher Planets. You may imagine what you please, but that seems to me not imaginary onely but impracticable; And that the Inhabitants of those Planets are Persons of so great accomplishments, is more than I know: but I am sure they are not the Persons here understood. For these must be such as inhabited this Earth before. WE look for new Heavens and new Earth, says the Apostle: Surely to have some share and interest

rest in them; otherwise there would be no comfort in that expectation. And the Prophet *Isaiah* said before, I create new Heavens and a new Earth, and the former shall come no more into remembrance: But be *YOU* glad and rejoyce for ever in that which I create. The truth is, none can have so good pretensions to this spot of ground we call the Earth, as the Sons of Men, seeing they once possess it. And if it be restor'd again, 'tis their propriety and inheritance. But 'tis not Mankind in general that must possess this new World, but the *Israel of God*, according to the Prophet *Isaiah*; or the *Just*, according to St. *Peter*. And especially those that have suffer'd for the sake of their Religion. For this is that *Palingenesia*, as we noted before, that *Renovation*, or *Regeneration* of all things, where our Saviour says, Those, that suffer loss for his sake, shall be recompenced: *Matt. 19. 28, 29.*

But they must then be raised from the Dead. For all Mankind was destroy'd at the Conflagration: and there is no resource for them any other way, than by a Resurrection. 'Tis true: and St. *John* gives us a fair *Apoc. 20.* occasion to make this supposition, *That* there will be some raised from the Dead, before the General Day of Judgment. For he plainly distinguisheth of a *First* and *Second* Resurrection, and makes the first to be a thousand Years before the second, and before the general Day of Judgment. Now, if there be truly and really a two-fold Resurrection, as St. *John* tells us; and at a thousand Years distance from one another: It may be very rationally presum'd, that Those that are raised in the first Resurrection, are those *Just* that will inhabit the *new Heavens and new Earth*. Or whom our Saviour promis'd to reward in the Renovation of the World.

For otherwise, who are those *Just* that shall inhabit the *new Earth*, and whence do they come? Or when is that Restauration which our Saviour speaks of, wherein those that suffer'd for the sake of the Gospel shall be rewarded? St. *John* says, the *Martyrs*, at this first Resurrection, shall live again and reign with Christ. Which seems to be the reward promis'd by our Saviour, to those that suffer'd for his sake: and the same

Persons in both places. *And I saw the Souls of them, says St. John, that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God: and which had not worshipped the Beast, &c. and They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.* These, I say, seem to be the same Persons to whom Christ had before promis'd and appropriated a particular reward. And this reward of theirs, or this Reign of theirs, is upon *Earth*: upon some Earth, new or old: not in Heaven. For, besides that we read nothing of their Ascension into Heaven after their Resurrection: There are several marks that shew it must necessarily be understood of a state upon Earth.

Ver. 9. For Gog and Magog came from the four quarters of the Earth, and besieged the Camp of the Saints, and the beloved City. That Camp and that City therefore were upon the Earth. And fire came down from Heaven and devoured them. If it came down from Heaven, it came upon the Earth. Furthermore, those Persons that are rais'd from the Dead, are said to be *Priests of God and of Christ, and to reign with him a thousand years.* Now these must be the same Persons with the *Priests and Kings*, mention'd in the Fifth Chapter: which are there said expressly to reign upon Earth, or that they should reign upon Earth. It remains therefore onely to determine, *What Earth* this is, where the *Sons of the first Resurrection* will live and reign. It cannot be the present Earth, in the same state, and under the same circumstances it is now. For what happiness or privilege would that be, to be call'd back into a mortal life, under the necessities and inconveniences of sickly Bodies, and an incommodious World? such as the present state of mortality is, and must continue to be, till some change be made in Nature. We may be sure therefore, that a change will be made in Nature before that time, and that the state they are rais'd into, and the Earth they are to inhabit, will be, at least, *Paradisiacal*: And consequently can be no other than the *new Heavens and new Earth*, which we are to expect after the Conflagration.

From these Considerations, there is a great fairness to conclude, both as to the Characters of the Persons, and of the place or state, that the *Sons of the first Resurrection*,

urrection will be Inhabitants of the *New Earth*, and reign there with Christ a thousand years. But seeing this is one of the principal and peculiar Conclusions of this Discourse, and bears a great part in this last Book of the Theory of the Earth, it will deserve a more full explication, and a more ample proof, to make it out. We must therefore take a greater compass in our discourse, and give a full account of that State which is usually call'd the *Millennium*: The Reign of the Saints a thousand years, or the Kingdom of Christ upon Earth. But before we enter upon this new Subject, give me leave to close our present Argument, about the *Renovation of the World*, with some Testimonies of the Ancient Philosophers, to that purpose. 'Tis plain to me, that there were amongst the Ancients several Traditions, or traditionary conclusions, which they did not raise themselves, by reason and observation, but receiv'd them from an unknown Antiquity. An instance of this is the *Conflagration of the World*: A Doctrine, as ancient, for any thing I know, as the World it self. At least as ancient as we have any Records. And yet none of those Ancients that tell us of it, give any argument to prove it. Neither is it any wonder, for they did not invent it themselves, but receiv'd it from others without proof, by the sole authority of Tradition. In like manner the *Renovation of the World*, which we are now speaking of, is an ancient Doctrine: both amongst the *Greeks* and *Eastern Philosophers*: But they shew us no method *how* the World may be *renew'd*, nor make any proof of its future Renovation; For it was not a discovery which they first made, but receiv'd it, with an implicate faith, from their Masters and Ancestors. And these Traditionary Doctrines were all fore-runners of that Light that was to shine more clearly at the opening of the Christian dispensation; to give a more full account of the fate and revolutions of the Natural World, as well as of the Moral.

The *Jews*, 'tis well known, held the *Renovation* of the World, and a *Sabbath* after six thousand years: according to the Prophecy that was currant amongst them,

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them, whereof we have given a larger account in the precedent Book, ch. 5. And that future state they call'd *Olam Hava*, or the *World to come*, which is the very same with S. Paul's *Habitable Earth to come*, Heb. 2. 6. Neither can I easily believe, that those constitutions of *Moses* that proceed so much upon a *Septenary*, or the number *Seven*, and have no ground or reason, in the nature of the thing, for that particular number: I cannot easily believe, I say, that they are either accidental or humoursome: without design or signification. But that they are typical, or representative of some *Septenary* state, that does eminently deserve and bear that Character. *Moses*, in the History of the Creation, makes six days work, and then a Sabbath. Then, after six years, he makes a *Sabbath-year*: and after a Sabbath of years a year of Jubilee, Levit. 25. All these lesser revolutions seem to me to point at the grand Revolution, the great *Sabbath* or *Jubilee*, after six Millenaries, which as it answers the type in point of time, so likewise in the nature and contents of it: Being a state of Rest from all labour and trouble and servitude: a state of joy and triumph: and a state of *Renovation*, when things are to return to their first condition and pristine order. So much for the *Jews*.

The Heathen Philosophers, both *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, had the same doctrine of the *Renovation* of the *World*, currant amongst them. And that under several names and phrases; as of the *Great Year*, the *Restoration*, the *Mundane periods*, and such like. They suppos'd stated and fix'd periods of time, upon expiration whereof there would always follow some great revolution of the *World*, and the face of Nature would be renew'd. Particularly after the Conflagration, the *Stoicks* always suppos'd a new *World* to succeed, or another frame of Nature to be erected in the room of that which was destroy'd. And they use the same words and phrases upon this occasion that Scripture useth; *Chrysippus* calls it *Apocatastasis*, as S. Peter does, Act. 3. 21. *Marcus Antoninus* in his *Meditations* several times calls it *Palingenesia*, as our Saviour does, Matt. 19. 28. And *Numenius* hath two Scri-

Lact. l. 7. c. 23.

Euseb. prap.
Ev. l. 7. c. 23.

Scripture-words, *Resurrection* and *Restitution*, to express this renovation of the World. Then as to the *Platonicks*, that Revolution of all things hath commonly been call'd the *Platonick* year, as if *Plato* had been the first author of that opinion; But that's a great mistake; he receiv'd it from the *Barbarick* Philosophers, and particularly from the *Aegyptian* Priests, amongst whom he liv'd several years, to be instructed in their learning. But I do not take *Plato* neither to be the first that brought this doctrine into *Greece*: for, besides that the *Sibylls*, whose antiquity we do not well know, sung this Song of old, as we see it copyed from them by *Virgil* in his fourth Eclogue: *Pythagoras* taught it before *Plato*: and *Orpheus* before them both. And that's as high as the Greek Philosophy reaches.

The *Barbarick* Philosophers were more ancient: namely the *Aegyptians*, *Persians*, *Chaldeans*, *Indian Brackmans*, and other Eastern Nations. Their Monuments indeed are in a great measure lost, yet from the remains of them which the *Greeks* have transcrib'd, and so preserv'd, in their writings, we see plainly they all had this doctrine of the *Future Renovation*. And to this day the posterity of the *Brackmans* in the East Indies, retain the same notion, That the World will be renewed after the last Fire. You may see the citations, if you please, for all these Nations, in the *Latin Treatise*, ch. 5. Which I thought would be too dry and tedious to be render'd into English.

To these Testimonies of the Philosophers of all Ages, for the Future Renovation of the World, we might add the Testimonies of the Christian Fathers: Greek and Latin, ancient and modern. I will only give you a bare List of them, and refer you to the *Latin Treatise* for the words or the places. Amongst the Greek Fathers, *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Origen*, The Fathers of the Council of Nice, *Eusebius*, *Basil*; The two *Cyrills*, of *Jerusalem* and *Alexandria*; The two *Gregories*, *Nazianzen* and *Nyssen*; *S. Chrysostom*, *Zacharias Mitylenensis*; and of later date, *Damascen*, *Oecumenius*, *Euthymius*, and others. These have all set their hands and Seals to this doctrine. Of the Latin Fathers, *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, *S. Hilary*, *S. Ambrose*, *S. Austin*,
S. Je-

Propos. I.

S. Jerome; and many later Ecclesiastical Authors. These, with the Philosophers before mentioned, I count good authority, Sacred and prophane: which I place here as an out-guard upon Scripture, where our principal force lies. And these three united and acting in conjunction, will be sufficient to secure this first post, and to prove our first Proposition, which is this: *That after the Conflagration of this World, there will be New Heavens and a New Earth: and that Earth will be inhabited.*

C H A P. IV.

The proof of a Millennium, or of a blessed Age to come, from Scripture. A view of the Apocalypse, and of the Prophecies of Daniel, in reference to this Kingdom of Christ and of his Saints.

WE have given fair presumptions, if not proofs, in the precedent Chapter, That the Sons of the first Resurrection will be the persons that shall inhabit the *New Earth*, or the World to come. But to make that proof compleat and unexceptionable, I told you it would be necessary to take a larger compass in our discourse, and to examine what is meant by *That Reign with Christ a thousand years*, which is promis'd to the Sons of the *first Resurrection*; by St. John in the Apocalypse; and in other places of Scripture is usually call'd the *Kingdom of Christ*, and the reign of the Saints. And by Ecclesiastical Authors, in imitation of S. John, it is commonly styled the *Millennium*. We shall indifferently use any of these words or phrases; and examine, First, the truth of the Notion and Opinion; whether in Scripture there be such an happy state promised to the Saints, under the conduct of Christ. And then we will proceed to examine

examine the nature, characters, place and time of it. And I am in hopes when these things are duly discuss'd and stated, you will be satisfied that we have found out the true Inhabitants of the New Heavens and New Earth: and the true mystery of that state which is call'd the *Millennium*, or the Reign of Christ and of his Saints.

We begin with *S. John*; whose words, in the twentieth chapter of the *Apocalypse*, are express, both as to the first Resurrection, and as to the reign of those Saints, that rise, with Christ, for a thousand years. Satan in the mean time being bound, or disabled from doing mischief and seducing mankind, The words of the Prophet are these: *And I saw an Angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the Dragon, that old Serpent, which is the Devil and Satan; and bound him a thousand years. And I saw Thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the Souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their fore-heads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first Resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first Resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.* These words do fully express a Resurrection, and a reign with Christ a thousand years. As for that particular space of time, of a *thousand years*, it is not much material to our present purpose: but the Resurrection here spoken of, and the reign with Christ, make the substance of the controversie, and in effect prove all that we enquire after at present. This Resurrection, you see, is call'd the *First Resurrection*, by way of distinction from the second and general Resurrection; which is also taken notice of, and plac'd a thousand years after the first. And both this first Resurrection and the reign of Christ, seem to be appropriated to the

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ver. 1, 2,
4, 5, 6.

Martyrs in this place. For the Prophet says, *The Souls of those that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, &c. They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.* From which words, if you please, we will raise this Doctrine: That, *Those that have suffered for the sake of Christ and a good Conscience, shall be raised from the dead a thousand years before the general Resurrection, and reign with Christ, in an happy state.* This Proposition seems to be plainly included in the words of *S. John*, and to be the intended sense of this Vision; but you must have patience a little as to your enquiry into particulars, till, in the progress of our discourse, we have brought all the parts of this conclusion into a fuller light.

In the mean time, there is but one way, that I know of, to evade the force of these words, and of the conclusion drawn from them; and that is, by supposing that the *First Resurrection* here mentioned, is not to be understood in a literal sense, but is Allegorical and mystical; signifying only a Resurrection from sin to a Spiritual Life. As we are said to be *dead in sin*, and to be *risen with Christ*, by Faith and Regeneration. This is a manner of Speech which *S. Paul* does sometimes use: as *Ephes. 2. 6.* and *5. 14.* and *Col. 3. 1.* But how can this be applyed to the present case? Were the Martyrs dead in sin? 'Tis they that are here rais'd from the dead. Or, after they were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, naturally dead and laid in their graves, were they then regenerate by Faith? There is no congruity in allegories so applyed. Besides, why should they be said to be regenerate a thousand years before the day of Judgment: Or, to reign with Christ, after this Spiritual Resurrection, such a limited time, a thousand years? why not to Eternity? For in this allegorical sense of *rising* and *reigning*, they will reign with him for everlasting. Then, after a thousand years must all the wicked be regenerate, and rise into a Spiritual Life? 'Tis said here, *The rest of the Dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished.* That implies, that at the end of these thousand years, the rest of the dead did live again; which, according to the

Allegory

Allegory must be, that, after a thousand years, all the wicked will be regenerate, and rais'd into a Spiritual Life. These absurdities arise upon an allegorical exposition of this Resurrection, if apply'd to single Persons.

But Dr. *Hammond*, a Learned and worthy Divine; (but one that loves to contract and cramp the sence of Prophecies) making this first Resurrection allegorical, applies it not to single Persons, but to the state of the Church in general; The Christian Church, he says, shall have a Resurrection for a thousand years: that is, shall rise out of Persecution, be in a prosperous condition, and an undisturb'd profession of the true Religion, for so long a time. But this agrees with the Prophecy as little as the former; If it be a state of the Church in general, and of the Church then in being, why is this Resurrection apply'd to the Martyrs? why are they said to rise? seeing the state they liv'd in, was a troublesome state of the Church; and it would be no happiness to have that reviv'd again. Then as to the Time of this Resurrection of the Church, where will you fix it? The Prophet *Daniel* places this Reign of Christ, at, or after the dissolution of the fourth Monarchy: and St. *John* places it a thousand years before the last Day of Judgment: How will you adjust the Allegorical Resurrection of the Church to these limits? Or if, in point of time; you was free, as to Prophecy; yet how would you adjust it to History? Where will you take these thousand years of happiness and prosperity to the Church? These Authors suppose them past, and therefore must begin them either from the first times of the Gospel, or from the time of *Constantine*. Under the first Ages of the Gospel, were, you know, the great Persecutions by the *Heathen* Emperours: Could those be call'd the Reign of Christ and of his Saints? Was Sathan then bound? or was this Epocha but a thousand years before the Day of Judgment? And if you begin this Resurrection of the Church from the days of *Constantine*, when the Empire became Christian, how will you reckon a thousand years from that time, for the continuance of the Church in peace and purity? for

Ver. 5.

the reign of Christ and of his Saints must necessarily imply both those Characters. Besides, who are the *rest of the Dead*, that liv'd after the expiration of those thousand years, if they begun at *Constantine*? And why is not the second Resurrection and the Day of Judgment yet come? Lastly, you ought to be tender of interpreting the first Resurrection in an Allegorical sence, lest you expose the second Resurrection to be made an Allegory also.

Book 3. ch. 5.

To conclude, the words of the Text are plain and exprefs for a literal Resurrection, as to the first, as well as the second; and there is no Allegorical interpretation that I know of, that will hold through all the particulars of the Text, consistently with it self and with History. And when we shall have prov'd this future Kingdom of Christ from other places of the Apocalypse, and of Holy Writ, you will the more easily admit the literal sence of this place: Which, you know, according to the receiv'd rule of Interpreters, is never to be quitted or forsaken, without necessity. But when I speak of confirming this Doctrine from other passages of Scripture, I do not mean as to that definite time of a *thousand years*, for that is no where else mention'd in the Apocalypse or in Scripture, that I know of; and seems to be mention'd here, in this close of all things, to mind us of that type that was propos'd in the beginning of all things, *Of Six days and a Sabbath*. Whereof each Day comprehends a thousand years, and the *Sabbath*, which is the *Millennial state*, hath its thousand. According to the known Prophecy of *Elias*, which, as I told you before, was not onely receiv'd amongst the *Jews*, but also own'd by very many of the Christian Fathers.

Chap. 11. 15,
16, 17, 18.

To proceed therefore to other parts of *St. John's* Prophecies, that set forth this Kingdom of Christ. The Vision of the *Seven Trumpets* is one of the most remarkable in the Apocalypse; and the seventh Trumpet, which, plainly reaches to the end of the World, and the Resurrection of the Dead, opens the Scene to the *Millennium*. Hear the sound of it. *The seventh Angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of*

of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty Elders, which sat before God on their Seats, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God: Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned. And the Nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the Dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the Prophets, and to the Saints, and them that fear thy Name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them that destroy the Earth, &c. This is manifestly the kingdom of Christ: and with this is joyn'd the Resurrection of the Dead, and the rewarding of the suffering Prophets and Saints; as in the twentieth Chapter. This is that mystery of God that was to be finish'd in the days of the voice of the seventh Angel: as is said in the 20th. Chap. ver. 7. As he hath declared to his servants the Prophets. Namely, the mystery of this kingdom, which was foretold by the Prophets of the Old Testament: and more especially by Daniel, as we shall see hereafter.

The new Jerusalem, (as it is set down, Apoc. 21. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.) is another instance or image of this kingdom of Christ. And the Palm-bearing Company, Chap. 7, 9, &c. are some of the Martyrs that shall enjoy it. They are plainly describ'd there as Christian Martyrs; (ver. 14.) And their reward, or the state of happiness they are to enjoy, (ver. 15, 16, 17.) is the same with that of the Inhabitants of the new Jerusalem: Ch. 21. 2, 3, 4, &c. as, upon comparing those two places, will easily appear. Furthermore, at the opening of the Seals, Chap. 5. which is another principal Vision, and reaches to the end of the World, there is a prospect given us of this kingdom of Christ, and of that reward of his Saints. For when they sing the new Song to the Lamb, (ver. 9, 10.) they say, *Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the Seals thereof: For thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood. And hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests: and we shall reign on the Earth.* This must be the same state, and the same thousand-years-Reign mention'd in the 20th. Chapter. Where 'tis said, (ver. 6.) the partakers of

shall

shall be Priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Another compleatory Vision, that extends it self to the end of the World, is that of the *seven Vials*, Ch. 15, & 16. And as at the opening of the Seals, so at the pouring out of the Vials, a triumphal Song is sung, and 'tis call'd the *Song of Moses and of the Lamb*. 'Tis plainly a Song of thanksgiving for a Deliverance: but I do not look upon this deliverance as already wrought, before the pouring out of Vials, though it be plac'd before them: as often the grand design and issue of a Vision is plac'd at the beginning. It is wrought by the Vials themselves, and by their effusion, and therefore upon the pouring out of the last Vial, The voice came out of the Temple of Heaven, from the Throne, saying, *Consummatum est: It is done*. Now the Deliverance is wrought, now the work is at an end: or, *The mystery of God is finish'd*, as the phrase was before, concerning the 7th. Trumpet: Ch. 10. 7. You see therefore this terminates upon the same time, and consequently upon the same state, of the *Millennium*. And that they are the same Persons that triumph here, and reign there, Ch. 20. You may see by the same Characters given to both of them. Here, those that triumph, are said to have gotten the victory over the Beast, and over his Image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name. And there, Those that reign with Christ, are said to be those that had not worshipped the Beast, neither his Image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands. These are the same Persons therefore, triumphing over the same Enemies, and enjoying the same reward.

And you shall seldom find any *Doxology* or *Hallelujah* in the Apocalypse, but 'tis in prospect of the kingdom of Christ, and the *Millennial* state. That is still the burthen of the Sacred Song: The complement of every grand Vision, and the life and strength of the whole Systeme of Prophecies in that Book. Even those *Halleluja's* that are sung at the destruction of *Babylon*, in the 19th. Chapter, are rais'd upon the view of the succeeding state, the *Reign of Christ*. For the Text says, *And I heard as it were a voice of a great multitude, and*
as

as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah. **FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH.** Let us be glad and rejoyce and give honour to him: **FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, AND HIS WIFE HATH MADE HER SELF READY.** This appears plainly to be the New Jerusalem, if you consult the 21. ch. ver. 2. And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, **PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND.** 'Tis, no doubt, the same Bride and Bridegroom, in both places; the same marriage or preparations for marriage; which are compleated in the Millennial bliss, in the kingdom of Christ and of his Saints.

I must still beg your patience a little longer, in pursuing this argument throughout the Apocalypse. As towards the latter end of S. John's Revelation this Kingdom of Christ shines out in a more full glory, so there are the dawns of it in the very beginning and entrance into his Prophecies. As at the beginning of a Poem, we have commonly in a few words the design of the Work, in like manner S. John makes this Preface to his Prophecies, *From Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth: unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood: And hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen. Behold, he cometh in the clouds, &c.* In this Prologue the grand argument is pointed at, and that happy Catastrophe and last Scene which is to crown the Work: The Reign of Christ and of his Saints at his second coming. He hath made us Kings and Priests unto God: This is always the Characteristick of those that are to enjoy the Millennial happiness; as you may see at the opening of the Seals, chap. 5. 10. and in the Sons of the First Resurrection, ch. 20. 6. And this being joyned to the coming of our Saviour, puts it still more out of doubt. That expression also, of being washed from our sins in his blood, is repeated again both at the opening of the Seals, ch. 5. 9. and in the Palm-bearing Company, ch. 7. 14. both which places we

we have cited before as referring to the Millennial State.

Give me leave to add further, that as in this general Preface, so also in the Introductory visions of the *Seven Churches*, there are, covertly or expressly, in the conclusion of each, glances upon the *Millennium*. As in the first to *Ephesus*, the Prophet concludes, *He that bath an ear, let him hear, what the Spirit says to the Churches: TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH WILL I GIVE TO EAT OF THE TREE OF LIFE, WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE PARADISE OF GOD.* This is the Millennial happiness which is promised to the Conquerour; as we noted before concerning that phrase. In like manner in the second to *Smyrna*, He concludes: *He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death.* This implies, he shall be partaker of the first Resurrection, for that's the thing understood; as you may see plainly by their being joyn'd in the 20th ch. ver. 6. *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first Resurrection: on such the second death hath no power: but they shall be Priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.* In the 3d to *Pergamus*, the promise is, *to eat of the hidden Manna, to have a white stone, and a new name written in it.* But seeing the Prophet adds, *which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it*, we will not presume to interpret that new state, whatsoever it is. In *Thyatira*, the reward is, *To have power over the nations*, and to have the *Morning Star*. Which is to reign with Christ, who is the morning Star, in his Millennial Empire: both these phrases being us'd in that sense in the close of this Book. In *Sardis* the promise is, *To be clothed in white raiment, and not to be blotted out of the Book of Life.* And you see afterwards the *Palm-bearing Company* are clothed in *white robes*; and those that are admitted into the *New Jerusalem*, are such as are written in the *Lamb's book of life*, ch. 21. 27. Then as to *Philadelphia*, the reward promised there does openly mark the Millennial state, by the *City of God, New Jerusalem which cometh down out of heaven from God: compar'd with chap. 21. 2.* Lastly, to the Church of *Laodicea* is said, *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with*

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with me in my Throne. And that is the usual phrase to express the dignity of those that reign with Christ, in his Millennial kingdom: as you may see, *Apo. 20. 4. Matt. 19. 28. Dan. 7. 9, 13, 14.* So all these promises to the Churches aim at one and the same thing, and terminate upon the same point; 'Tis the same reward express'd in different ways; and seeing 'tis still fixt upon a victory, and appropriated to those that overcome, it does the more easily carry our thoughts to the *Millennium*, which is the proper reward of Victors, that is, of Martyrs and Confessors.

Thus you see how this notion and mystery of the Millennial kingdom of Christ, does both begin and end the *Apocalypse*, and run thorough all its parts: As the Soul of that Body of Prophecies: A Spirit or ferment that actuates the whole mass. And if we could thoroughly understand that illustrious Scene at the opening of this Apocalyptical Theatre in the 4th and 5th chap. I do not doubt but we should find it a Representation of the Majesty of our Saviour in the Glory of his future Kingdom. But I dare not venture upon the explication of it, there are so many things of difficult and dubious interpretation, coucht under those Schemes. Wherefore having made these observations upon the Prophecies of *S. John*, we will now add to them some reflections upon the Prophecies of *Daniel*. That by the agreement and concurrence of these two great Witnesses, the Conclusion we pretend to prove, may be fully established.

In the Prophecies of *Daniel* there are two grand Visions, that of the *Statue* or Image, *chap. 2.* and that of the four Beasts, *chap. 7.* And both these Visions terminate upon the *Millennium*, or the Kingdom of Christ. In the Vision of the Statue, representing to us the four great Monarchies of the World successively, (whereof, by the general consent of Interpreters, The *Roman* is the fourth and last) after the dissolution of the last of them, a fifth Monarchy, the Kingdom of Christ, is openly introduc'd, in these words: *And in the days of these kingdoms, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroy'd, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall*

shall break in pieces, and consume all those kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. This may be verified, in some measure, by the first coming of our Saviour in the days of the 4th kingdom; when his Religion from small beginnings, in a short time overspread the greatest part of the known World. As the stone cut out without hands, became a great mountain and filled the whole Earth. But the full and final accomplishment of this Prophecy cannot be till the second coming of our Saviour. For not till then, will he break in pieces and consume all those kingdoms; and that in such a manner, *that they shall become like the chaff of the Summer threshing-floor, carried away by the wind: so as no place shall be found for them.* This, I say, will not be done, nor an everlasting Kingdom erected in their place, over all the Nations of the Earth, till his Second Coming, and his Millennial Reign.

But this Reign is declared more expressly, in the Vision of the four Beasts, chap. 7. For after the destruction of the fourth Beast, the Prophet says, *I saw in the night, Visions, and behold one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him: And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away: and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.* Accordingly he says, ver. 21, 22. *The last Beast and the little Horn made war against the Saints, until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the Saints of the most High; and the time came that the Saints possessed the kingdom.* And lastly, in pursuit still of the same argument, he concludes to the same effect in fuller words, ver. 26, 27. *But the Judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the Saints of the most High: whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*

Here is the end of the matter: says the Prophet. Here is the upshot and result of all. Here terminate both the

the Prophecies of *Daniel* and *St. John*: and all the affairs of the Terrestrial World. *Daniel* brings in, this kingdom of Christ, in the conclusion of two or three Visions; but *St. John* hath interwoven it every where with his Prophecies, from first to last. And you may as well open a Lock without a Key, as interpret the Apocalypse without the *Millennium*. But after these two great Witnesses, the one for the old Testament, the other for the new, we must look into the rest of the Sacred Writers; for tho' every single Author there, is an Oracle, yet the concurrence of Oracles is still a further demonstration, and takes away all remains of doubt or incredulity.

C H A P. V.

A view of other places of Scripture concerning the Millennium or future kingdom of Christ. In what sence all the Prophets have born Testimony concerning it.

THE Wife of *Zebedee* came to our Saviour, and begg'd of him, like a fond Mother, that her two Sons might sit, one at his right hand, th'other at his left, when he came into his kingdom. Our Saviour does not deny the supposition, or general ground of her request, that *he was to have a kingdom*; but tells her, The honours of that kingdom were not then in his disposal. He had not drunk his Cup, nor been baptiz'd with his last baptism: which were conditions, both to him and others, of entring into that kingdom. Yet, in another place, our Saviour is so well assur'd of his interest and authority there, by the good will of his Father, that he promises to his Disciples and followers, that for the losses they should sustain here, upon his account, and for the sake of his Gospel, they should receive there an hundred fold; and sit upon

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Thrones

Dan. 7. 9.
Apoc. 20. 4.

Thrones with him, judging the Tribes of Israel. The words are these: *And Jesus said unto them, verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the Regeneration or Renovation, when the Son of man shall sit in the Throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* These Thrones, in all reason, must be understood to be the same with those which we mention'd in the foregoing Chapter, out of *Daniel* and the *Apocalypse*: and therefore mark the same time and the same state. And seeing, in those places, they plainly signified the *Millennial* state, or the kingdom of Christ and of his Saints, they must here signify the same, in this promise of our Saviour to his suffering Followers. And as to the word *Palingenesia*, which is here translated *Regeneration*, 'tis very well known, that, both the *Greek* Philosophers, and *Greek* Fathers, use that very word for the *Renovation of the World*. Which is to be, as we shall hereafter make appear, at or before the *Millennial* state.

Our Saviour also, in his Divine Sermon upon the Mount, makes this one of his *Beatitudes*, *Blessed are the Meek, for they shall inherit the Earth.* But how, I pray, or where, or when, do the Meek inherit the Earth? neither at present, I am sure, nor in any past Ages. 'Tis the Great Ones of the World, ambitious Princes and Tyrants, that slice the Earth amongst them: and those that can flatter them best, or serve them in their interests or pleasures, have the next best shares. But a meek, modest, and humble Spirit, is the most unqualified Person that can be for a Court, or a Camp: to scramble for Preferment, or Plunder. Both He, and his self-denying notions, are ridicul'd, as things of no use, and proceeding from meanness and poorness of Spirit. *David*, who was a Person of an admirable devotion, but of an unequal Spirit; subject to great dejections, as well as elevations of mind; was so much affected with the prosperity of the wicked in this World, that he could scarce forbear charging Providence with injustice. You may see several touches of a repining Spirit in his *Psalms*: and in the *Seventy-third Psalm*, compos'd upon that Subject, you have both the wound and the cure. Now this Beatitude pronounc'd

pronounc'd here by our Saviour, was spoken before by *David*, *Psal. 37. 11.* The same *David* that was always so sensible of the hard usage of the Just in this life. Our Saviour also, and his Apostles, preach the Doctrine of the Cross every where, and foretell the sufferings that shall attend the Righteous, in this World. Therefore neither *David*, nor our Saviour, could understand this *inheritance of the Earth*, otherwise than of some future state, or of a state yet to come. But as it must be a future state, so it must be a Terrestrial state; for it could not be call'd the *inheritance of the Earth*, if it was not so. And 'tis to be a state of *peace*, as well as *plenty*, according to the words of the *Psalmist*, *But the meek shall inherit the Earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.* It follows therefore from these premisses, that, both our Saviour, and *David*, must understand some future state of the Earth, wherein the *Meek* will enjoy both peace and plenty. And this will appear to be the future kingdom of Christ, when, upon a fuller description, we shall have given you the marks and characters of it.

In the mean time, why should we not suppose, this Earth, which the Meek are to inherit, to be that *habitable Earth to come*, which *St. Paul* mentions (*Hebr. 2. 6.*) and represents as subject to our Saviour in a peculiar manner: at his disposal and under his government, as his kingdom; Why should not that Earth be the subject of this Beatitude: The promis'd Land, the Lot of the Righteous? This I am sure of, that both this Text and the former deserve our serious thoughts; and tho' they do not expressly, and in terms, prove the future kingdom of our Saviour, yet upon the fairest interpretations they imply such a state. And it will be very uneasy to give a satisfactory account, either of the *Regeneration* or *Renovation*, when our Saviour and his Disciples shall sit upon Thrones: Or of that *Earth* which the *Meek* shall inherit: Or lastly, of that *Habitable World*, which is peculiarly subject to the dominion of Jesus Christ, without supposing, on this side Heaven, some other reign of Christ and his Saints, than what we see, or what they enjoy, at present.

But to proceed in this argument. It will be necessary, as I told you, to set down some notes and characters of this Reign of Christ and of his Saints, whereby it may be distinguish'd from the present state, and present kingdoms of the World. And these characters are chiefly three, *Justice, Peace, and Divine Presence* or conduct, which uses to be called *Theocrasie*. By these characters it is sufficiently distinguish'd from the kingdoms of this World; which are generally unjust in their titles or exercise: stain'd with blood: and so far from being under a particular divine conduct, that humane passions and humane vices, are the Springs that commonly give motion to their greatest designs. But more particularly and restrainedly, the Government of Christ, is oppos'd to the kingdom and government of Antichrist, whose characters are diametrically opposite to these, being *injustice, cruelty, and humane or diabolical artifices*.

Upon this short view of the kingdom of Christ, let us make enquiry after it amongst the Prophets of the Old Testament. And we shall find, upon examination, that there is scarce any of them, greater or lesser, but take notice of this mystical kingdom; either expressly, or under the types of *Israel, Sion, Jerusalem*, and such like. And therefore I am apt to think, that, when *S. Peter* in his Sermon to the *Jews*, *Act. 3.* says, All the holy Prophets spoke of *The Restitution of all things*, he does not mean the Renovation of the World separately from the kingdom of Christ, but complexly, as it may imply both. For there are not many of the old Prophets that have spoken of the Renovation of the *Natural* World; but a great many have spoken of the Renovation of the *Moral*, in the kingdom of Christ. These are *S. Peter's* words: *Act. 3. 19, 20, 21. Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And he shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens must receive until the times of RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS.* The Apostle here mentions three things, The *Times of refreshing*, The *Second Coming* of our Saviour, And the *Times of Re-*
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stitution of all things. And to the last of these he immediately subjoins, *which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy Prophets, since the world began.* This *Restitution of all things*, I say, must not be understood abstractly from the reign of Christ, but as in conjunction with it; and in that sense, and no other, it is the general subject of the Prophets.

To enter therefore into the Schools of the Prophets; and enquire their sense concerning this mystery, let us first address our selves to the Prophet *Isaiah*, and the Royal Prophet *David*; who seem to have had many noble thoughts, or inspirations, upon this subject. *Isaiah* in the 65th chap. from the 17th ver. to the end, treats upon this argument: and joyns together the Renovation of the Natural and Moral World; as *S. Peter*, in the place forementioned, seems to do. And accordingly the Prophet, having set down several natural characters of that State, as indolency and joy, longevity, ease, and plenty, from ver. 18. to the 24th. He there begins the moral characters, of divine favour, and such a particular protection, that they are heard and answer'd before they pray. And lastly, He represents it as a state of universal peace and innocency, ver. 23. *The Wolf and the Lamb shall feed together, &c.*

This last character, which comprehends *Peace, Justice, and Innocency*, is more fully display'd by the same Prophet, in the 11th chap. where he treats also of the Kingdom of Christ. Give me leave to set down his words, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. *But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the Earth: and he shall smite the Earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The Wolf also shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lye down with the kid: and the Calf and the young Lyon, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the Cow and the Bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together: and the Lyon shall eat straw like the Ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the Asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the Cocka-*

Cockatrice-den. They shall not hurt, nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the Earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the Sea. Thus far the Prophet: Now if we joyn this to what we noted before, from his 65th chap. concerning the same state, 'twill be impossible to understand it of any order of things, that is now, or hath been hitherto in the World. And consequently it must be the Idea of some state to come, and particularly of that which we call the Future Kingdom of Christ.

The same pacifick temper, Innocency and Justice, are celebrated by this Prophet when the *Mountain of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains*, chap. 2. 2, 4. *And he shall judge amongst the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.* And as to righteousness, he says in the 23. chap. *Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, and Princes shall rule in judgment, &c.* These places, I know, usually are applyed to the first coming of our Saviour; the peaceableness of his doctrine, and the propagation of it through all the World. I willingly allow this to be a true sence, so far as it will go. But 'tis one thing to be a true sence, to such a degree; and another thing to be the final sence and accomplishment of a Prophecy. The affairs of the first and second coming of our Saviour are often mingled together in the Prophecies of the Old Testament; but in that mixture there are some characters whereby you may distinguish what belongs to his first, and what to his second coming: what to the time when he came to suffer, and what to the time when he shall come to reign. For instance, In these Prophecies recited, though there are many things very applicable to his first coming, yet that *Regality* which is often spoken of, and that universal Peace and Innocency that will accompany it, cannot be verified of his coming in the flesh. Seeing it is plain, that in his state of humiliation he did not come as a King, to rule over the nations of the Earth. And he says himself expressly, *That his Kingdom is not of this World.*

World. *Joh. 18. 36.* And the Prayer of *Salome*, and of the good Thief upon the Cross, suppose it not then present, but to come. Then as to the establishment of Peace in his kingdom, it does not at all appear to me that there is more peace in the World now than there was before our Saviour came into it; or that the Christian parts of the World are more peaceable than the unchristian. Therefore these great promises of a *Pacifick kingdom*, which are exprest in terms as high and emphatical as can be imagin'd, must belong to some other days, and some other ages, than what we have seen hitherto.

You'l say, it may be, 'tis not the fault of the Gospel that the World is not peaceable, but of those that profess it, and do not practise it. This is true, but it does not answer the Prophecy; for that makes no such exception. And by such a reserve as this, you may elude any Prophecy. So the *Jews* say, Their *Messiah* defers his coming beyond the time appointed by Prophecy, because of their sins: but we do not allow this for a good reason. The *Israelites* had their promised *Canaan*, tho' they had render'd themselves unworthy of it; and by this method of interpreting Prophecies, all the happiness and glory promised in the Millennial kingdom of Christ may come to nothing, upon a pretended forfeiture. Threatnings indeed may have a tacit condition; God may be better than his word, and, upon repentance, divert his judgments; but he cannot be worse than his word, or fail of performance, when, without any condition exprest, he promises or prophesies good things to come. This would destroy all assurance of hope or faith. Lastly, This Prophecy concerning *Pacifick times* or a *Pacifick kingdom*, is in the 65th chap. sub-joyn'd to the *Renovation of the Heavens and the Earth*, and several marks of a change in the Natural World; which things we know did not come to pass at the first coming of our Saviour: there was no change of Nature then, nor has been ever since. And therefore this happy change, both in the Natural and Moral World, is yet to come.

Matt. 20. 21.
Luk. 23. 42.

Isa. 65.

But

But, as we said before, we do not speak this exclusively of the first coming of our Saviour, as to other parts of these Prophecies; for no doubt that was one great design of them. And in the Prophecies of the old Testament, there are often three gradations, or gradual accomplishments; The first, in some King of *Israel*, or some Person or affair relating to *Israel*, as National onely. The second, in the Messiah at his first coming. And the last, in the Messiah, and his Kingdom at his second coming. And that which we affirm and contend for, is, that the Prophecies fore-mention'd have not a final and total accomplishment, either in the Nation of the *Jews*, or at the first coming of our Saviour. And this we 'bide by.

The next Prophet that we mention'd, as a witness of the future kingdom of Christ, is *David*. Who, in his Psalms, seems to be pleas'd with this subject above all others; And when he is most exalted in his thoughts and Prophetical raptures, the Spirit carries him into the kingdom of the Messiah, to contemplate its glory, to sing praises to its King, and triumph over his Enemies: *Psal. 68. Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: Let them also that hate him flie before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. But let the Righteous be glad, &c.* The plain ground he goes upon in this Psalm, is the Deliverance out of *Ægypt*, and bringing the *Israelites* into the Land of *Canaan*; But when he is once upon the wing, he soars to an higher pitch: from the type to the Antitype: To the days of the Messiah, the Ascension of our Saviour; and, at length, to his kingdom and dominion over all the Earth. The 45th. Psalm is an *Epithalamium* to Christ and the Church, or to the *Lamb* and his *Spouse*. And when that will be, and in what state, we may learn from *St. John, Apoc. 19. 7, 8. and ch. 21. 2, 9.* Namely, after the destruction of *Babylon*, in the new *Jerusalem* glory. The words and matter of the two Prophets answer to one another; Here, in this Psalm, there is a fight and victory celebrated, as well as a marriage: and so there is in that 19th. Chapter of *St. John*. Here, the Prophet says, *Gird thy Sword upon thy*

thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy Majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness: and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever; The Scepter of thy kingdom is a right Scepter, &c. There St. John says, having describ'd a Conquerour Apoc. 19. 15, 16. on a white Horse, Out of his mouth goeth a sharp Sword, that with it he should smite the Nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of Iron: and he treadeth the Winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his Vesture and on his thigh a Name written, KING of KINGS, and LORD of LORDS. This is the same glorious Conquerour and Bridegroom in both places: And this Victory is not gain'd, nor these Nuptials compleated till the second coming of our Saviour.

In many other Psalms, there are reflections upon this happy kingdom, and the triumph of Christ over his Enemies: as *Psal. 2. Psal. 9. Psal. 21. and 24. and 47. and 85. and 110. and others.* In these, and such like Psalms, there are lineaments and colours of a fairer state, than any we have yet seen upon Earth. Not but that in their first instances and grounds they may sometimes respect the state of *Israel*, or the Evangelical state: but the eye of the Prophet goes further, this does not terminate his sight: His Divine enthusiasme reaches into another World: A world of *Peace* and *Justice*, and *Holiness*: of *Joy*, and *Victory*, and *Triumph* over all the wicked: and consequently such a World, as neither we, nor our Fathers, have yet seen.

This is an account of two Prophets, *David* and *Isaiah*: and of what they have more openly declar'd concerning the future kingdom of Christ. But to verifie St. Peter's words, in that foremention'd place, *Act. 3. 21. viz.* that all the *Holy Prophets since the World began*, have spoken of the Restauration of all things at the second coming of Christ. I say, to verifie this assertion of St. Peter's, we must suppose, that, where the Prophets speak of the Restauration and future glory of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, they do, under those Types, represent to us the glory and happiness of the Church in the future kingdom of Christ. And most of the

Prophets, in this sence, and under these forms, have spoken of this kingdom: In foretelling the Restauration of *Jerusalem* and *Sion*; and happy days, peace, plenty, and prosperity to the People of *Israel*.

Most of the Prophets, I say, from *Moses* to *Malachy*, have spoken of this Restauration. *Moses* in the 30th. of *Deut. ver. 4, 5, 9.* *David*, in many of those Psalms we have cited. *Isaiah*, besides the places foremention'd, treats amply of this subject, *Chap. 51.* and in several other places. * So likewise the Prophet *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, *Hosea*, *Joel*, *Amos*, *Obadiah*, *Micah*, *Zephany*, *Haggai*, *Zachary*, *Malachy*. All these have, either expressly, or under the types of *Jerusalem* and *Sion*, foretold happy days, and a glorious triumph to the Church of God. And seeing in the new Testament, and in the Prophecies of *St. John*, the Christian Church is still represented, as under persecution and distress, till the fall of Anti-christ, and the Millennial Kingdom; 'Tis then, and not till then, that we must expect the full accomplishment of these Prophecies; The Restauration that *St. Peter* says was spoken of, by all the Prophets: and the mystery, which *St. John* says, (*Apoc. 10. 7.*) was declared by his Servants the Prophets, and would be finish'd under the 7th. Trumpet, which ushers in the Kingdom of Christ.

* *Isaiah ch. 11.*
ch. 43. ch. 49.
13, &c. ch. 66.
Ezekiel, ch.
28. ch. 37.
Hof. ch. 3. &
ch. 14. Joel 3.
18. Amos, ch.
9. Obad. ver.
17, &c. Mich.
ch. 4. ch. 5.
Zeph. 3. 14.
&c. Haggai,
ch. 2. Zac. 2.
10, &c. &c. ch.
9. 9, &c. &c.
ch. 14. Mala.
ch. 3. ch. 4.

It would be too long to examine all these places in the Prophets, which you may consult at leisure. However it cannot seem strange that *Jerusalem* should be us'd in a typical or allegorical sence, seeing we often find such applications of it in the new Testament: as *Gal. 4. 26. Hebr. 12. 22. Apoc. 3. 12.* And 'tis very natural that *Jerusalem* restor'd, should signifie the same thing as *New Jerusalem*; and therefore that *St. John*, by his *New Jerusalem*, intended the same thing, or the same state, that the ancient Prophets did by their Restauration of *Jerusalem*. And if neither can be understood in a literal sence, which, I believe, you will not contend for: they must both be interpreted of the future happiness and glory of the Church in the Kingdom of Christ.

But to conclude this point wholly as to Scripture; If we make reflection upon all the passages alledg'd

ledg'd in this and the foregoing Chapter, whether out of the Old or New Testament, we must at least acknowledge thus much; That there are happy days, at one time or other: Days of Peace and Righteousness: of Joy and Triumph: of external Prosperity and internal Sanctity: when Vertue and Innocency shall be in the Throne, and Vice and vitious Men out of power or credit. That there are such happy days prophesied of in Scripture, and promised to the Church of God: Whether you call this the *Reign of Christ* and of his Saints, or by any other name, it is not material at present to determine; let the title be what you will, as to the substance it cannot be denied to be a general doctrine of Prophetical Scripture. And we must not imagine, that the Prophets writ like the Poets: feigned an Idea of a Romantick state, that never was, nor ever will be; only to please their own fancies, or the credulous people. Neither is it the state of Heaven and eternal life that is here meant or intended: For, besides that they had little or no light concerning those Notions, in the Old Testament: The Prophets generally in their description of this happiness, either express the Earth, or at least give plain marks of a Terrestrial state. Wherefore the only question that remains, is this, *Whether* these happy Days are past already, or to come: Whether this blessed state of the Church is behind us, or before us: whether our predecessors have enjoy'd it, or our posterity is to expect it? For we are very sure that it is not present; The World is full of Wars, and rumours of wars: of vice and knavery, of oppression and persecution: and these are things directly contrary to the genius and characters of the state which we look after.

And if we look for it in times past, we can go no further back than the beginning of Christianity. For *S. John*, the last of the Apostles, prophesied of these times, as to come: and plac'd them at the end of his systeme of Prophecies; whereby one might conclude that they are not only within the compass of the Christian ages, but far advanc'd into them. But however, not to insist upon that at present, where will you find a thousand years, from the birth of

Christianity to this present age, that deserves the name, or answers to the characters of this *Pure and Pacifick* state of the Church. The first ages of Christianity, as they were the most pure, so likewise were they the least peaceable. Continually, more or less, under the Persecution of the Heathen Emperours; and so far from being the reign and Empire of Christ and his Saints over the Nations, that Christians were then, every where, in subjection or slavery; A poor, feeble, helpless people, thrust into Prisons, or thrown to the Lyons, at the pleasure of their Princes or Rulers. 'Tis true, when the Empire became Christian under *Constantine*, in the fourth Century, there was, for a time, peace and prosperity in the Church, and a good degree of Purity and Piety. But that peace was soon disturb'd, and that piety soon corrupted. The growing pride and ambition of the Ecclesiasticks, and their easiness to admit or introduce Superstitious Practices, destroy'd the purity of the Church. And as to the peace of it, Their contests about opinions and doctrines, tore the Christians themselves into pieces; and, soon after, an inundation of Barbarous People fell into Christendom, and put it all into flames and confusion. After this Eruption of the Northern Nations, *Mahometanism* rose in the East; and swarms of *Saracens*, like armies of Locusts, invaded, conquer'd, and planted their religion in several parts of the *Roman* Empire and of the Christianiz'd World. And can we call such times the Reign of Christ, or the imprisonment of Satan? In the following ages, the *Turks* over-run the Eastern Empire and the *Greek* Church, and still hold that miserable people in slavery. Providence seems to have so order'd affairs, that the Christian World should never be without a *WOE* upon it, lest it should fancy it self already in those happy days of Peace and Prosperity, which are reserv'd for future times. Lastly, whosoever is sensible of the corruptions and persecutions of the Church of *Rome*, since she came to her greatness; whosoever allows her to be *mystical Babylon*, which must fall before the kingdom of Christ comes on; will think that kingdom duly plac'd by *S. John* at the
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the end of his Prophecies, concerning the Christian Church: and that there still remains, according to the words of S. Paul, (Hebr. 4. 9.) *a Sabbath to the people of God.*

CHAP. VI.

The sense and testimony of the Primitive Church concerning the Millennium, or future kingdom of Christ: from the times of the Apostles to the Nicene Council. The second Proposition laid down. When, by what means, and for what reasons, that doctrine was afterwards neglected or discountenanced.

YOU have heard the voice of the Prophets and Apostles, declaring the future kingdom of Christ. Next to these, the Primitive Fathers are accounted of good authority; Let us therefore now enquire into their Sense concerning this Doctrine, that we may give satisfaction to all parties; And both those that are guided by Scripture alone, and those that have a Veneration for Antiquity, may find proofs suitable to their inclinations and judgment.

And to make few words of it, we will lay down this Conclusion, *That the Millennial kingdom of Christ was the general doctrine of the Primitive Church, from the times of the Apostles to the Nicene Council; inclusively.* S. John out-liv'd all the rest of the Apostles, and towards the latter end of his life, being banish'd into the Isle of *Pathmos*, he writ his *Apocalypse*; where-
Iren.
in he hath given us a more full and distinct account of the Millennial kingdom of Christ, than any of the Prophets or Apostles before him. *Papias*, Bishop of *Hierapolis*, and Martyr; one of S. John's Auditors, as *Irenæus* testifies; taught the same doctrine after S. John. lib. 5. c. 33.
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He was the familiar friend of *Polycarp*, another of *St. John's* Disciples; and either from him, or immediately from *St. John's* mouth, he might receive this doctrine. That he taught it in the Church, is agreed on by all hands; both by those that are his followers, as *Irenæus*; and those that are not well-wishers to this doctrine, as *Eusebius* and *Jerome*.

There is also another chanel wherein this doctrine is traditionally deriv'd from *St. John*, namely by the Clergy of *Asia*; as *Irenæus* tells us in the same Chapter. For, arguing the point, he shows that the Blessing promis'd to *Jacob* from his Father *Isaac*, was not made good to him in this life, and therefore he says, *without doubt those words had a further aim and prospect upon the times of the kingdom: (so they us'd to call the Millennial state) when the Just rising from the dead, shall reign: and when Nature renew'd and set at liberty, shall yield plenty and abundance of all things; being blest with the dew of Heaven, and a great fertility of the Earth. According as has been related by those Ecclesiasticks or Clergy, who see St. John, the Disciple of Christ: and heard of him WHAT OUR LORD HAD TAUGHT CONCERNING THOSE TIMES.* This, you see, goes to the Fountain-head. The Christian Clergy receive it from *St. John*, and *St. John* relates it from the mouth of our Saviour.

*Dial. with
Tryphon the
Jew.*

So much for the Original authority of this doctrine, as a Tradition: that it was from *St. John*, and by him from Christ. And as to the propagation and prevailing of it in the primitive Church, we can bring a witness beyond all exception, *Justin Martyr*, contemporary with *Irenæus*, and his Senior. He says, *that himself, and all the Orthodox Christians of his time, did acknowledge the Resurrection of the flesh (suppose the first resurrection) and a thousand years reign in Jerusalem restor'd, or in the new Jerusalem. According as the Prophets, Ezekiel, and Isaiah, and Others, attest with common consent. As St. Peter had said before, Act. 3. 21. That all the Prophets had spoken of it.* Then he quotes the 65th. Chapter of *Isaiah*, which is a bulwork for this doctrine, that never can be broken. And to shew the Jew, with whom he had this discourse, that it was the sence of

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our Prophets, as well as of theirs, He tells him, that a certain Man amongst us Christians, by name John, one of the Apostles of Christ, in a Revelation made to him did prophesie, that the faithful believers in Christ should live a thousand years in the new Jerusalem; and after that should be the general Resurrection and day of Judgment. Thus you have the thoughts and sentiment of Justin Martyr, as to himself: as to all the reputed Orthodox of his time; As to the sence of the Prophets in the old Testament, and as to the sence of St. John in the Apocalypse. All conspiring in confirmation of the Millenary doctrine.

To these three witnesses, Papias, Irenæus, and Justin Martyr, we may add two more within the second age of the Church: Melito, Bishop of Sardis, and St. Barnabas, or whosoever was the Author of the Epistle under his name. This Melito, by some is thought to be the Angel of the Church of Sardis, to whom St. John directs the Epistle to that Church: Apoc. 3. 1. But I do not take him to be so ancient; However he was Bishop of that place, at least in the second Century, and a Person of great Sanctity and Learning. He writ many Books, as you may see in St. Jerome: and, as He notes out of Tertullian, was by most Christians reputed a Prophet. He was also a declar'd Millenary, and is recorded as such, both by Jerome and Gennadius. As to the Epistle of Barnabas, which we mention'd, it must be very ancient, whosoever is the Author of it, and before the third Century; seeing it is often cited by Clemens Alexandrinus, who was himself within the second Century. The genius of it is very much Millenarian, in the interpretation of the Sabbath, the promis'd Land, a Day for a thousand years, and concerning the Renovation of the World. In all which, He follows the foot-steps of the Orthodox of those times: that is, of the Millenarians.

So much for the first and second Centuries of the Church. By which short account it appears, that the Millenary doctrine was Orthodox and Catholick in those early days. For these Authors do not set it down as a private opinion of their own, but as a Christian doctrine, or an Apostolical Tradition. 'Tis remarkable what

de Script.
Eccles.

Dogm. Eccl.
c. 55.

De Script.
Eccles.

Vide Hieron.
Epist. 28. ad
Lucinium.

what *Papias* says of himself, and his way of learning, In his Book call'd, *The Explanation of the Words of the Lord*, as *St. Jerome* gives us an account of it: He says in his Preface, *He did not follow various opinions, but had the Apostles for his Authors. And that he consider'd what Andrew, what Peter said; what Philip, what Thomas, and other Disciples of the Lord. As also what Aristion, and John the Senior, Disciples of the Lord, what they spoke. And that he did not profit so much by reading Books, as by the living voice of these persons which resounded from them to that day.* This hath very much the air of truth and sincerity, and of a Man that, in good earnest, sought after the Christian doctrine, from those that were the most authentick Teachers of it. I know *Eusebius* in his *Ecclesiastical History*, gives a double Character of this *Papias*; In one place, he calls him, *A very eloquent Man in all things, and skilful in Scripture*; and in another, he makes him a man of a *small understanding*. But what reason there is to suspect *Eusebius* of partiality in this point of the *Millennium*; we shall make appear hereafter. However, we do not depend upon the learning of *Papias*, or the depth of his understanding: allow him but to be an honest man, and a fair witness, and 'tis all we desire. And we have little reason to question his testimony in this point, seeing it is backt by others of good credit; and also because there is no counter-evidence, nor any witness that appears against him. For there is not extant, either the Writing, Name, or Memory, of any Person, that contested this doctrine in the first or second Century. I say, that call'd in question this Millenary doctrine, propos'd after a Christian manner; unless such Hereticks as deny'd the Resurrection wholly: or such Christians as deny'd the divine authority of the Apocalypse.

We proceed now to the third Century. Where you find *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Victorinus*, Bishop and Martyr: *Nepos Ægyptius*, *Cyprian*, and, at the end of it, *Lactantius*: All openly professing, or implicitly favouring the Millenary doctrine. We do not mention *Clemens Alexandrinus*, contemporary with *Tertullian*, because he hath not any thing, that I know of, expressly either for,
or

or against the Millennium. But he takes notice that the *Seventh Day* hath been accounted *Sacred*, both by the Hebrews and Greeks, because of the *Revolution* of the *World*, and the *Renovation* of *all things*. And giving this as a reason why they kept that day *Holy*, seeing there is not a Revolution of the World every seven days, it can be in no other sense than as the *Seventh Day* represents the *seventh Millenary*, in which the Renovation of the World and the kingdom of Christ, is to be. As to *Tertullian*, *S. Jerome* reckons him, in the first place, amongst the Latin *Millenaries*. And tho' his Book, about the *Hope* of the *Faithful*, as also that about *Paradise*, which should have given us the greatest light in this affair, be both lost or suppress'd; yet there are sufficient indications of his *Millenary* opinion in his Tracts against *Marcion*, and against *Hermogenes*. *S. Cyprian* was *Tertullian's* admirer, and inclines to the same opinion, so far as one can judge, in this particular; for his period of *Six thousand years*, and making the *Seventh Millenary* the Consummation of all, is wholly according to the Analogy of the *Millenary* doctrine. As to the two Bishops, *Victorinus* and *Nepos*, *S. Jerome* vouches for them. The writings of the one are lost, and of the other so chang'd, that the sense of the Author does not appear there now. But *Lactantius*, whom we nam'd in the last place, does openly and profusely teach this doctrine, in his *Divine Institutions*: and with the same assurance that he does other parts of the Christian Book 7. Doctrine. For he concludes thus, speaking of the Millennium, *This is the Doctrine of the Holy Prophets, which we Christians follow. This is our wisdom, &c.* Yet he acknowledges there that it was kept as a mystery or secret amongst the Christians, lest the Heathens should make any perverse or odious interpretation of it. And for the same or like reason, I believe, The Book of the *Apocalypse* was kept out of the hands of the Vulgar for some time, and not read publicly, lest it should be found to have spoken too openly of the fate of the *Roman Empire*, or of this *Millennial State*.

So much for the first, second, and third Century of the Church. But, by our conclusion, we engag'd to make out this proof as far as the *Nicene Council*, Inklusively. The *Nicene Council* was about the year of Christ 325. and we may reasonably suppose *Lactantius* was then living; at least he came within the time of *Constantine's* Empire. But however the Fathers of that Council are themselves our witnesses in this point. For, in their *Ecclesiastical Forms* or *Constitutions*, in the chapter about the Providence of God, and about the World, they speak thus; *The World was made meaner or less perfect, providentially; for God foresee that man would sin. Wherefore we expect New Heavens and a New Earth, according to the holy Scriptures: at the appearance and kingdom of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* And then, as *Daniel* says (ch. 7. 18.) *The Saints of the most High shall take the kingdom. And the Earth shall be pure, holy, the land of the living, not of the dead. Which David foreseeing by the eye of Faith, cries out (Ps. 27. 13.) I believe to see the good things of the Lord, in the land of the living. Our Saviour says, Happy are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth, Matt. 5. 5. and the Prophet Isaiah says, (chap. 26. 6.) the feet of the meek and lowly shall tread upon it.* So you see, according to the judgment of these Fathers, there will be a kingdom of Christ upon Earth; and moreover, that it will be in the *New Heavens* and the *New Earth*. And, in both these points, they cite the Prophets and our Saviour in confirmation of them.

Thus we have discharg'd our promise and given you an account of the doctrine of the *Millennium*, or future kingdom of Christ, throughout the three first Ages of the Church: before any considerable corruptions were crept into the Christian Religion. And those Authorities of single and successive Fathers, we have seal'd up all together, with the declaration of the *Nicene* Fathers, in a Body. Those that think Tradition a rule of Faith, or a considerable motive to it, will find it hard to turn off the force of these Testimonies. And those that do not go so far, but yet have a reverence for Antiquity and the Primitive Church, will not easily produce better authorities,
more

more early, more numerous, or more uncontradicted, for any article that is not fundamental. Yet these are but Seconds to the Prophets and Apostles, who are truly the Principals in this cause. I will leave them altogether, to be examin'd and weigh'd by the impartial Reader. And because they seem to me to make a full and undeniable proof, I will now at the foot of the account set down our second Proposition, which is this, *That there is a Millennial State, or a Propos. 2. Future Kingdom of Christ and his Saints, Prophefied of and Promised, in the Old and New Testament; and receiv'd by the Primitive Church as a Christian and Catholick Doctrine.*

HAVING dispatch'd this main point, To conclude the Chapter and this head of our discourse, It will be some satisfaction possibly to see, *How* a Doctrine so generally receiv'd and approv'd, came to decay and almost wear out of the Church, in following Ages. The Christian Millenary doctrine was not call'd into question, so far as appears from History, before the middle of the third Century; when *Dionysius Alexandrinus* writ against *Nepos*, an *Ægyptian* Bishop, who had declar'd himself upon that subject. But we do not find that this Book had any great effect; for the declaration or constitution of the *Nicene Fathers* was after: and in *S. Jerome's* time, who writ towards the end of the fourth Century, this doctrine had so much Credit, that, He, who was its greatest adversary, yet durst not condemn it, as he says himself. *Quæ licet non sequamur, tamen damnare non possumus; quia multi Ecclesiasticorum virorum & Martyres ista dixerunt.* Which things, or doctrines, speaking of the Millennium, tho' we do not follow, yet

we cannot condemn. Because many of our Church-men, and Martyrs, have affirmed these things. And when Apollinarius replied to that Book of Dionysius, S. Jerome says, that, not only those of his own Sect, but a great multitude of other Christians did agree with Apollinarius in that particular. *Ut præsagâ mente jam cer-
nam, quantorum in me rabies concitanda sit.* That I now foresee, how many will be enrag'd against me, for what I have spoken against the Millenary doctrine.

We may therefore conclude that in S. Jerome's time the Millenaries made the greater party in the Church; for a little matter would not have frightened him from censuring their opinion. S. Jerome was a rough and rugged Saint, and an unfair adversary, that usually run down, with heat and violence, what stood in his way. As to his unfairness, he shews it sufficiently in this very cause, for he generally represents the Millenary doctrine after a Judaical rather than a Christian manner. And in reckoning up the chief Patrons of it, he always skips Justin Martyr. Who was not a man so obscure as to be overlook'd: and he was a man that had declar'd himself sufficiently upon this point, for he says, both himself and all the Orthodox of his time, were of that judgment, and applies both the Apocalypse of S. John, and the 65th chap. of Isaiah, for the proof of it. As we noted before.

Eccles. Hist.
3. 22.
τεράτολο-
γίας.

*l. 3. 32. de
vit. Constan.*

As S. Jerome was an open enemy to this doctrine, so Eusebius was a back friend to it; and represented every thing to its disadvantage, so far as was tolerably consistent with the fairness of an Historian. He gives a slight character of Papias, without any authority for it; and brings in one Gaius that makes Cerinthus to be the author of the Apocalypse and of the Millennium: and calls the Visions there monstrous stories. He himself is willing to shuffle off that Book from John the Evangelist to another John a Presbyter: and to shew his skill in the interpretation of it, he makes the New Jerusalem in the 21th chap. to be Constantine's Jerusalem, when he turn'd the Heathen Temples there into Christian. A wonderful invention. As S. Jerome by his flouts, so Eusebius by sinister insinuations, endeavour'd to lessen the reputation of this doctrine; and the art they both us'd,

us'd, was, to misrepresent it as *Judaical*. But we must not cast off every doctrine which the Jews believ'd, only for that reason; for we have the same Oracles which they had, and the same Prophets: and they have collected from them the same general doctrine that we have, namely, that *there will be an happy and pacifick state of the Church, in future times*. But as to the circumstances of this state we differ very much; They suppose the Mosaical Law will be restor'd, with all its pomp, rites, and ceremonies; whereas we suppose the Christian Worship, or something more perfect, will then take place. Yet *S. Jerome* has the confidence, even there where he speaks of the many Christian Clergy and Martyrs that held this doctrine: has the confidence, I say, to represent it, as if they held that *Circumcision, Sacrifices*, and all the Judaical rites, should then be restor'd. Which seems to me to be a great slander, and a great instance how far mens passions will carry them, in misrepresenting an opinion which they have a mind to disgrace.

But as we have reason to blame the partiality of those that opposed this doctrine, so, on the other hand, we cannot excuse the Patrons of it from all indiscretions. I believe they might partly themselves make it obnoxious; by mixing some things with it, from pretended traditions, or the Books of the Sibylls, or other private authorities, that had so sufficient warrant from Scripture; and things, sometimes, that Nature would not easily bear. Besides, in later ages, they seem to have dropt one half of the doctrine, namely, the *Renovation of Nature*, which *Irenæus, Justin Martyr*, and the Ancients, joyn inseparably with the Millennium. And by this omission, the doctrine hath been made less intelligible, and one part of it inconsistent with another. And when their pretensions were to reign upon this present Earth, and in this present state of Nature, it gave a jealousy to Temporal Princes, and gave occasion likewise to many of fanatical Spirits, under the notion of Saints, to aspire to dominion, after a violent and tumultuary manner. This I reckon as one great cause that brought the doctrine into discredit. But I hope by reducing of it to the true state, we shall cure this and other abuses, for the future.

Lastly,

Lastly, It never pleas'd the Church of *Rome*; and so far as the influence and authority of that would go, you may be sure it would be deprest and discountenanc'd. I never yet met with a Popish Doctor that held the *Millennium*; and *Baronius* would have it pass for an Heresie, and *Papias* for the Inventor of it; whereas, if *Irenæus* may be credited, it was receiv'd from St. *John*, and by him from the mouth of our Saviour. And neither St. *Jerome*, nor his friend Pope *Damasus*, durst ever condemn it for an *heresie*. It was always indeed uneasie, and gave offence, to the Church of *Rome*, because it does not suite to that Scheme of Christianity, which they have drawn. They suppose Christ reigns already, by his Vicar, the Pope: and treads upon the Necks of Emperours and Kings. And if they could but suppress the *Northern Heresie*, as they call it, they do not know what a Millennium would signifie, or how the Church could be in an happier condition than she is. The *Apocalypse* of St. *John* does suppose the true Church under hardship and persecution, more or less, for the greatest part of the Christian Ages: namely for 1260. years, while the witnesses are in Sack-cloth. But the Church of *Rome* hath been in prosperity and greatness, and the commanding Church in Christendom, for so long or longer, and hath rul'd the Nations with a Rod of Iron; so as that mark of the true Church, does not favour her at all. And the *Millennium* being properly a reward and triumph for those that come out of Persecution, such as have liv'd always in pomp and prosperity can pretend to no share in it, or benefit by it. This has made the Church of *Rome* have always an ill eye upon this doctrine, because it seem'd to have an ill eye upon her. And as she grew in splendor and greatness, she eclips'd and obscur'd it more and more: so that it would have been lost out of the World as an obsolete errour, if it had not been reviv'd by some of the Reformation.

CHAP. VII.

The true state of the Millennium, according to Characters taken from Scripture; some mistakes concerning it, examin'd.

WE have made sufficient proof of a Millennial state, from Scripture and Antiquity; and upon that firm Basis have settled our second Proposition. We should now determine the *Time* and *Place* of this future kingdom of Christ: Not whether it is to be in Heaven, or upon Earth: for that we suppose determin'd already; but whether it is to be in the present Earth, and under the present constitution of Nature, or in the *New Heavens* and *New Earth*, which are promis'd after the *Conflagration*. This is to make our *Third Proposition*: and I should have proceeded immediately to the examination of it, but that I imagine it will give us some light in this affair, if we enquire further into the true state of the *Millennium*, before we determine its *Time* and *Place*.

We have already noted some *moral* Characters of the *Millennial* state; And the great *Natural* Character of it, is this in general, That it will be *Paradisiacal*. Free from all inconveniences, either of external Nature, or of our own Bodies. For my part, I do not understand how there can be any considerable degree of happiness without *Indolency*: nor how there can be *Indolency*, while we have such Bodies as we have now, and such an external constitution of Nature. And as there must be *Indolency*, where there is happiness; so there must not be *Indigency*, or want of any due comforts of life. For where there is *Indigency*, there is solicitude, and distraction, and uneasiness, and fear: Passions, that do as naturally disquiet the Soul, as pain does the Body. Therefore *Indolency* and *Plenty* seem to be two essential Ingredients of every happy state; and these two in conjunction make that state we call *Paradisiacal*.
Now

Now the Scripture seems plainly to exempt the Sons of the *New Jerusalem*, or of the *Millennium*, from all pain or want, in those words, Apoc. 21. 4. *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying: neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.* And the Lord of that kingdom, *He that sate upon the Throne*, said, *Behold I make all things new*, ver. 5. This Renovation is a restauration to some former state: and I hope not to that state of Indigency, and misery, and diseasedness, which we languish under at present. But to that pristine Paradisiacal state, which was the blessing of the first Heavens and the first Earth.

As Health and Plenty are the Blessings of Nature, so, in civil affairs, *Peace* is the greatest blessing. And this is inseparably annexed to the *Millennium*: an indelible character of the kingdom of Christ. And by *Peace* we understand, not onely freedom from Persecution upon religious accounts, but that *Nation shall not rise up against Nation*, upon any account whatsoever. That bloody Monster, *War*, that hath devour'd so many Millions of the Sons of *Adam*, is now at length to be chain'd up: and the Furies, that run throughout the Earth, with their Snakes and Torches, shall be thrown into the Abyss, to sting and prey upon one another. All evil and mischievous passions shall be extinguish'd: and that not in men onely, but even in Brute creatures, according to the Prophets. *The Lamb and the Lyon shall lie down together, and the sucking Child shall play with the Basilisk.* Happy days, when not onely the Temple of *Janus* shall be shut up for a thousand years, and the *Nations shall beat their Swords into plowshares*: but all enmities and antipathies shall cease, all acts of hostility, throughout all nature. And this Universal Peace is a demonstration also of the former character, *Universal Plenty*: for where there is want and necessitousness, there will be quarrelling.

Fourthly, 'Tis a kingdom of Righteousness, as well as of Peace. These also must go together; for unrighteous Persons will not live long in peace, no more than

than indigent Persons. The *Psalmist* therefore joyns them together: and *Plenty* also, as their necessary preservative: in his description of the kingdom of Christ: *Psal. 85. 10, 11, 12. Mercy and truth are met together: Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the Earth, and righteousness shall look down from Heaven. Tea the Lord shall give good, and our Land shall yield her increase.* This will not be a medley-state, as the present World is, good and bad mingled together; but a *chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar people.* Those that have a part in the first Resurrection, the Scripture pronounceth them *Holy and Blessed:* and says, *the second death shall have no power over them.* Satan also is bound and shut up in the bottomless Pit, and has no liberty of tempting or seducing this people, for a thousand years: but at the end of that time, he will meet with a degenerate crew, separate and aliens to the Holy City, that will make war against it, and perish in the attempt. In a word, those that are to enjoy this state, are always distinguish'd from the multitude, as People redeem'd from the Earth; That have wash'd their Robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and are represented as Victors over the World; with such other Characters as are incompetible to any but the righteous.

Fifthly, This will be a state under a peculiar divine presence and conduct. It is not easie indeed to determine the manner of this presence, but the Scripture plainly implies some extraordinary divine presence to enlighten and enliven that state. When the *New Jerusalem* was come down, *St. John* says, *And I heard a great voice out of Heaven, saying, Behold the Tabernacle of God is with men: and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people: and God himself shall be with them and be their God.* And the like is promis'd to the Palm-bearing Company, *Chap. 7. 15.* where they are admitted to the priviledges of the *New Jerusalem.* When our Saviour was incarnate, and vouchsafed to dwell amongst the Children of Men, the same phrase is us'd by this same Author, *Joh. 1. 14. The Word was made flesh, and Tabernacled amongst us: and we beheld*

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his

Apoc. 5. 9.

*ch. 7. 14.
ch. 14. 3, 4.
ch. 21. 27.*

Apoc. 21. 3.

ἐσκήνωσεν

שכינה
Maimon.
Mor. Nev.
par. I. c. 25.

his glory, &c. We read it, *He dwelt amongst us*, but render'd more closely, it is, *He set his Tabernacle amongst us*. And that which the *Hebrews* call the *Shekinah*, or *divine presence*, comes from this very word. Therefore there will be a *Shekinah* in that kingdom of Christ; but as to the mode of it, I am very willing to confess my ignorance.

The last Character that belongs to this state, or rather to those that enjoy it, is, that they are *Kings and Priests unto God*. This is a character often repeated in Scripture, and therefore the more to be regarded. It occurs thrice in the Apocalypse in formal terms, *Ch. 1. 6. Ch. 5. 10. Ch. 20. 6.* And as to the Regal dignity apart, that is further exprest, either by the *donation of a kingdom*, as in *Daniel's* phrase, *Chap. 7. 18, 22, 27.* Or by *placing upon Thrones*, with a judicial power; which is the New Testament style, *Matt. 19. 28. Luk. 22. 29, 30. Revel. 20. 4.* These two Titles, no doubt, are intended to comprehend the highest honours that we are capable of: these being the highest dignities in every kingdom; and such as were by the Ancients, both in the East and in the West, commonly united in one and the same Person: Their Kings being Priests, like *Melchisedeck*: or as the *Roman* Emperour was *Pontifex Maximus*. But as to the Sacerdotal character, that seems chiefly to respect the temper of the mind; to signify a People dedicated to God and his Service: Separate from the World, and from secular affairs: Spending their time in devotion and contemplation, which will be the great employments of that happy state. For where there is ease, peace, and plenty of all things: refin'd Bodies, and purified Minds, there will be more inclination to intellectual exercises and entertainments: which they may attend upon, without any distraction, having neither want, pain, nor worldly business.

The Title of *King* implies a confluence of all things that constitute temporal happiness. 'Tis the highest thing we can wish any in this World, to be a King. So as the *Regal* dignity seems to comprehend all the Goods of Fortune, or external felicity: And the *Sacerdotal*, the Goods of the Mind, or internal: Both which concur

concur in the constitution of true happiness. There is also a further force and emphasis in this notion, of the Saints being made Kings, if we consider it comparatively, with respect to what they were before in this World; where they were not only mean and despicable, in subjection and servility, but often under persecution, abus'd and trampled upon, by the secular and Ecclesiastical powers. But now the Scene is chang'd, and you see the reverse of Providence, according as *Abraham* said to the Rich man, Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivest thy good things, and likewise *Lazarus* evil things. But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. Now they are set upon Thrones and Tribunals, who were before arraigned as Criminals, and brought before tyrannical Judicatures. They are now Laws and Law-givers to themselves: in a true state of Royal Liberty, neither under the domination of evil men, nor of their own evil passions.

Some possibly may think, that this high character of being made Priests and Kings to God, is not general to all that enjoy the Millennium, but a prerogative belonging to the Apostles and some of the chief Martyrs, who are eminently rewarded for their eminent services. But Scripture, as far as I perceive, applies it to all that inherit that kingdom. *The redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, are made kings and priests to God, and shall reign on the earth, Apoc. 5. 9, 10.* And in the 20th chap. ver. 6. all the sons of the first Resurrection are made Priests of God and shall reign with him a thousand years. Here is no distinction or discrimination thus far. Not that we suppose an universal equality of conditions in the Millennial state, but as to all these characters which we have given of it, I do not perceive that they are restrain'd or confin'd by Scripture to single persons, but make the general happiness of that state, and are the portion of every one that is admitted into the New Jerusalem.

Others possibly may think that this privilege of the first Resurrection is not common to all that enjoy the Millennial state. For tho' *S. John*, who is the only per-

son that hath made exprefs mention of the *first Resurrection*, and of the *thousand years reign* of Christ, does joyn these two as the same thing, and common to the same persons; yet I know there are some that would distinguish them as things of a different extent, and also of a different nature. They suppose the Martyrs only will rise from the dead; and will be immediately translated into Heaven, and there pass their *Millennium* in celestial glory. While the Church is still here below, in her *Millennium*, such as it is; a state indeed better than ordinary, and free from persecution: but obnoxious to all the inconveniences of our present mortal life, and a medly of good and bad people, without separation. This is such an Idea of the *Millennium*, as, to my eye, hath neither beauty in it, nor foundation in Scripture. That the Citizens of the *New Jerusalem* are not a miscellaneous company, but a Community of righteous persons, we have noted before: and that the state of nature will be better than it is at present. But, besides this, what warrant have they for this Ascension of the Martyrs into Heaven at that time? where do we read of that in Scripture? And in those things that are not matters of Natural Order, but of Divine Oeconomy, we ought to be very careful how we add to Scripture.

The Scripture speaks only of the Resurrection of the Martyrs, *Apoc.* 20. 45. but not a word concerning their ascension into heaven. Will that be visible? We read of our Saviour's Resurrection and Ascension, and therefore we have reason to affirm them both. We read also of the Resurrection and ascension of the *Witnesses*, (*Apoc.* 11.) in a figurate sence, and in that sence we may assert them upon good grounds. But as to the Martyrs, we read of their Resurrection only, without any thing exprest or imply'd about their Ascension. By what authority then shall we add this new notion to the history or scheme of the Millennium? The Scripture on the contrary, makes mention of the descent of the *New Jerusalem*, *Apoc.* 21. 2. making the Earth the Theatre of all that affair. And the Camp of the Saints is upon the Earth, *ver.* 9. and these Saints are the same persons, so far as can be collected from the text,

text, that rise from the dead, and reign'd with Christ, and were Priests to God. ver. 4, 5, 6. Neither is there any distinction made, that I find, by S. John, of two sorts of Saints in the Millennium, the one in Heaven, and the other upon Earth. Lastly, The four and twenty Elders, *ch. 5. 10.* tho' they were Kings and Priests unto God, were content to reign upon Earth. Now who can you suppose of a superiour order to these four and twenty Elders: Whether they represent the twelve Patriarchs and twelve Apostles, or whomsoever they represent, they are plac'd next to him that sit upon the Throne, and they have Crowns of Gold upon their heads, *ch. 4. 4.* there can be no marks of honour and dignity greater than these are; and therefore seeing these highest Dignitaries in the Millennium or future kingdom of Christ, are to reign upon Earth, there is no ground to suppose the assumption of any other into Heaven upon that account, or upon that occasion. *chap. 11. 16.*

This is a short and general draught of the Millennial state, or future Reign of the Saints, according to Scripture. Wherein I have endeavour'd to rectifie some mistakes or misconceptions about it: That viewing it in its true nature, we may be the better able to judge, when and where it will obtain. Which is the next thing to be consider'd.

CHAP.

C H A P. VIII.

The Third Proposition laid down, concerning the time and place of the Millennium. Several Arguments us'd to prove that it cannot be till after the Conflagration: and that the New Heavens and the New Earth are the true Seat of the blessed Millennium.

Propos. 3.

WE come now to the Third and last head of our Discourse: To determine the *Time* and *Place* of the *Millennium*. And seeing it is indifferent whether the proofs lead or follow the Conclusion, we will lay down the Conclusion in the first place, that our business may be more in view; and back it with proofs in the following part of the Chapter. Our Third and last Proposition therefore is this, *That the Blessed Millennium, (properly so called) according as it is describ'd in Scripture, cannot obtain in the present Earth, nor under the present constitution of Nature and Providence; but is to be celebrated in the New Heavens and New Earth, after the Conflagration.* This Proposition, it may be, will seem a Paradox or singularity to many, even of those that believe a *Millennium*; We will therefore make it the business of this Chapter, to state it, and prove it; by such Arguments as are manifestly founded in Scripture and in Reason.

And to prevent mistakes, we must premise this in the first place; That, tho' the *Blessed Millennium* will not be in this Earth, yet we allow that the state of the Church here, will grow much better than it is at present. There will be a full *Resurrection of the Witnesses*, and an *Ascension* into power, and the tenth part of the City will fall; which things imply ease from Persecution, The Conversion of some part of the Christian World to the reformed Faith, and a considerable diminution of the power of Antichrist. But this

this still comes far short of the happiness and glory wherein the future Kingdom of Christ is represented. Which cannot come to pass till the *Man of Sin* be destroy'd, with a total destruction. After the Resurrection of the Witnesses, there is a Third *WOE* yet to come: and how long that will last, does not appear. If it bear proportion with the preceding *WOES*, it may last some hundreds of years. And we cannot imagine the *Millennium* to begin till that *WOE* be finish'd. As neither till the *Vials* be poured out, in the 15th chap. which cannot be all pour'd out till after the Resurrection of the Witnesses; those *Vials* being the last plagues that compleat the destruction of Antichrist. Wherefore allowing that the Church, upon the Resurrection and Ascension of the Witnesses, will be advanc'd into a better condition, yet that condition cannot be the Millennial state; where the Beast is utterly destroy'd, and Satan bound, and cast into the bottomless pit.

This being premis'd, let us now examine what grounds there are for the Translation of that blessed state into the New Heavens and New Earth: seeing that thought, it may be, to many persons, will appear new and extraordinary. In the first place, We suppose it out of dispute, that there will be New Heavens and a New Earth after the Conflagration. This was our first Proposition, and we depend upon it, as sufficiently prov'd both from Scripture and Antiquity. This being admitted, How will you stock this New Earth? What use will you put it to? 'Twill be a much nobler Earth, and better built than the present: and 'tis pity it should only float about, empty and useless, in the wild Air. If you will not make it the seat and habitation of the Just in the blessed *Millennium*, what will you make it? How will it turn to account? what hath Providence design'd it for? We must not suppose New Worlds made without counsel or design. And as, on the one hand, you cannot tell what to do with this New Creation, if it be not thus employ'd: so, on the other hand, it is every way fitted and suited to be an happy and Paradisiacal habitation, and answers all the natural Characters of the
Millen-

Millennial state; which is a great presumption that it is design'd for it.

But to argue this more closely upon Scripture-grounds. *St. Peter* says, the Righteous shall inhabit the new Heavens and the new Earth: *2 Pet. 3. 13. Nevertheless, according to his promise, we look for new Heavens and new Earth, WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS:* that is, a Righteous people, as we have shewn before. But who are these righteous People? that's the great question. If you compare *St. Peter's* new Heavens and new Earth with *St. John's, Apoc. 21. 1, 2.* it will go far towards the resolution of this question: For *St. John* seems plainly to make the Inhabitants of the *New Jerusalem* to be in this *New Earth. I saw,* says he, *new Heavens and a new Earth:* and the *New Jerusalem* descending from God out of Heaven; therefore descending into this *new Earth*, which he had mention'd immediately before. And there *the Tabernacle of God was with men, ver. 3.* and there He that sat upon the Throne, said, *Behold I make all things new.* Referring still to this new Heavens and new Earth, as the Theater where all these things are acted, or all these Scenes exhibited: from the first Verse to the eighth. Now the *New Jerusalem* state being the same with the Millennial, if the one be in the new Heavens and new Earth, the other is there also. And this interpretation of *St. John's* words is confirm'd and fully assur'd to us by the Prophet *Isaiah*; who also placeth the joy and rejoycing of the *new Jerusalem* in the new Heavens and new Earth: *Chap. 65. 17, 18. For behold I create new Heavens and a new Earth: and the former shall not be remembred: but be you glad and rejoyce for ever in that which I create: for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoycing and her people a joy. Namely in that new Heavens and new Earth. Which answers to St. John's Vision of the new Jerusalem being let down upon the new Earth.*

To these reasons, and deductions from Scripture, we might add the testimony of several of the Fathers; I mean of those that were Millenaries. For we are speaking now to such as believe the *Millennium*, but place it in the present Earth before the Renovation; where-

whereas the ancient Millenaries suppos'd the regeneration and renovation of the World before the kingdom of Christ came. As you may see in ** Irenæus*,^{32, &c.} *a Justin Martyr*, *b Tertullian*, *c Lactantius*, and *d the Author ad Orthodoxos*. And the neglect of this, I look upon as one reason, as we noted before, that brought that doctrine into discredit and decay. For when they plac'd the kingdom of the Saints upon this Earth, it became more capable of being abus'd, by fanatical spirits, to the disturbance of the World, and the invasion of the rights of the Magistrates, Civil or Ecclesiastical, under that notion of Saints. And made them also dream of sensual pleasures, such as they see in this life: Or at least gave an occasion and opportunity to those, that had a mind to make the doctrine odious, of charging it with these consequences. All these abuses are cut off, and these scandals prevented, by placing the Millennium aright. Namely, not in this present life, or on this present Earth, but in the new Creation, where peace and righteousness will dwell. And this is our first argument why we place the Millennium in the new Heavens and new Earth: And 'tis taken partly, you see, from the reason of the thing itself, the difficulty of assigning any other use of the New Earth, and its fitness for this; and partly from Scripture-evidence, and partly from Antiquity.

The second argument for our opinion, is this; The present constitution of Nature will not bear that happiness, that is promis'd in the Millennium, or is not consistent with it. The diseases of our Bodies, the disorders of our passions, the incommodioufness of external Nature; Indigency, servility, and the unpeaceableness of the World; These are things inconsistent with the happiness that is promis'd in the kingdom of Christ. But these are constant attendants upon this life, and inseparable from the present state of Nature. Suppose the Millennium was to begin Nine or Ten Years hence, as some pretend it will. How shall this World, all on a sudden, be metamorphos'd into that happy state? No more sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, nor death, says St. John: *All former things are past away.* But how past away? Shall we not have the same Bodies:

dies: and the same external Nature: and the same corruptions of the Air: and the same excesses and intemperature of Seasons? Will there not be the same barrenness of the ground: the same number of People to be fed: and must they not get their living by the sweat of their brows, with servile labour and drudgery? How then are all former evils past away? And as to publick affairs, while there are the same necessities of humane life, and a distinction of Nations, those Nations sometimes will have contrary interests, will clash and interfere one with another: whence differences, and contests, and Wars will arise, and the *Thousand Years Truce*, I am afraid, will be often broken. We might add also, that if our Bodies be not chang'd, we shall be subject to the same appetites, and the same passions: and upon those, vices will grow: as bad fruit upon a bad Tree. To conclude, so long as our Bodies are the same: external Nature the same: The necessities of humane life the same: which things are the roots of evil; you may call it a *Millennium*, or what you please, but there will be still diseases, vices, Wars, tears and cries, pain and sorrow in this *Millennium*; And if so, 'tis a *Millennium* of your own making; for that which the Prophets describe is quite another thing.

Furthermore, if you suppose the Millennium will be upon this Earth, and begin, it may be, ten or twenty years hence, How will it be introduc'd: how shall we know when we are in it, or when we enter upon it? If we continue the same, and all Nature continue the same, we shall not discern when we slip into the Millennium. And as to the Moral state of it, shall we all, on a sudden, *become Kings and Priests to God*? wherein will that change consist, and how will it be wrought? St. *John* makes the *First Resurrection* introduce the Millennium; and that's a conspicuous mark and boundary. But as to the modern or vulgar Millennium, I know not how 'tis usher'd in. Whether they suppose a visible resurrection of the Martyrs, and a visible Ascension: and that to be a Signal to all the World that the Jubilee is beginning: or whether 'tis gradual and creeps upon us insensibly: or the fall of the Beast marks

marks it. These things need both explication and proof; for to me they seem either arbitrary, or unintelligible.

But to return more closely to our Subject. That which gives me the greatest scandal in this doctrine of the vulgar Millennium, is, their joyning things together that are really inconsistent; a natural World of one colour, and a moral World of another. They will make us happy in spite of Nature: as the Stoicks would make a man happy in *Phalaris his Bull*; so must the Saints be in full bliss in the Millennium, tho' they be under a fit of the Gout or of the Stone. For my part, I could never reconcile pain to happiness: It seems to me to destroy and drown all pleasure, as a loud noise does a still voice. It affects the Nerves with violence, and over-bears all other motions. But if, according to this modern supposition, they have the same Bodies, and breath the same air, in the Millennium, as we do now, there will be both private and Epidemical distempers, in the same manner as now; Suppose then a Plague comes and sweeps away half an hundred thousand Saints in the Millennium, is this no prejudice or dishonour to the State? Or a War makes a Nation desolate: or, in single Persons, a lingering disease makes life a burthen: or a burning Fever, or a violent Colick tortures them to death. Where such evils as these reign, christen the thing what you will, it can be no better than a Mock-Millennium. Nor shall I ever be perswaded that such a state as our present life, where an akeing Tooth, or an akeing Head, does so discompose the Soul, as to make her unfit for business, study, devotion, or any useful employment: And that all the powers of the mind, all its vertue, and all its wisdom, are not able to stop these little motions, or to support them with tranquillity: I can never perswade my self, I say, that such a state was designed by God or Nature, for a state of happiness.

Our third argument is this; The future kingdom of Christ will not take place, till the kingdom of Antichrist be wholly destroy'd. But that will not be wholly destroy'd till the end of the World, and the

*Psal. 2. &
Psal. 72.
Isa. 2. 2.*

appearing of our Saviour. Therefore the Millennium will not be till then. Christ and Antichrist cannot reign upon Earth together: their kingdoms are opposite, as Light to darkness. Besides, the kingdom of Christ is universal, extends to all the Nations, and leaves no room for other kingdoms at that time. Thus it is describ'd in *Daniel*, in the place mention'd before, *Chap. 7. 13, 14.* *I saw in the Night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man, came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of days; And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom; that all People, Nations, and Languages, should serve him. And again, ver. 27. And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the Saints of the most High; whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.* The same character of universality is given to the kingdom of Christ by *David, Isaiah*, and other Prophets. But the most direct proof of this, is from the *Apocalypse*: where the *Beast* and *false Prophet* are thrown into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, (*Chap. 19. 20.*) before the Millennium comes on: *ch. 20.* *This, being cast into a Lake of fire burning with brimstone, must needs signifie utter destruction.* Not a diminution of power onely, but a total perdition and consumption. And that this was before the Millennium, both the order of the narration shows, and its place in the Prophecy; And also because notice is taken, at the end of the Millennium, of the *Beast* and *false Prophet's* being in the Lake of fire, as of a thing past, and formerly transacted. For when Satan, at length, is thrown into the same Lake, 'tis said, He is thrown into the Lake of fire and brimstone, *where the Beast and false Prophet are: Apoc. 20. 10.* They were there before, it seems; namely, at the beginning of the Millennium; and now at the conclusion of it, the Devil is thrown in to them. Besides, the Ligation of Satan proves this point effectually. For so long as Antichrist reigns, Satan cannot be said to be bound; but he is bound at the beginning of the Millennium, therefore Antichrist's reign was then totally expir'd. Lastly, the destruction of *Babylon*, and the destruction of

of Antichrist go together: but you see *Babylon* utterly and finally destroy'd, (*Apoc.* 18. and 19.) before the Millennium comes on. I say *utterly and finally destroy'd*. For she is not onely said to be made an utter desolation, but to be consum'd by fire: and absorpt as a Millstone thrown into the Sea: and that she shall be found no more at all, *Chap.* 18. 21. Nothing can express a total and universal destruction more effectually, or more emphatically. And this is before the Millennium begins; as you may see both by the order of the Prophecies, and particularly, in that upon this destruction, the Hallelujah's are sung, *Chap.* 19. and concluded thus, (*ver.* 6, 7.) *Hallelujah, for the God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoyce and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made her self ready.* This, I suppose, every one allows to be the Millennial state, which now approaches, and is making ready, upon the destruction of *Babylon*.

Thus much for the first part of our argument, that the kingdom of Christ will not take place, till the kingdom of Antichrist be wholly destroy'd. We are now to prove the second part: That the kingdom of Antichrist will not be wholly destroy'd till the end of the World, and the coming of our Saviour. This, one would think, is sufficiently prov'd from *St. Paul's* words alone, *2 Thess.* 2. 8. *The Lord shall consume the man of sin, who is suppos'd the same with Antichrist, with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of his coming.* He will not then be destroy'd before the coming of our Saviour: and that will not be till the end of the World. For *St. Peter* says, *Act.* 3. 21. *The Heaven must receive him, speaking of Christ, until the times of restitution of all things: that is, the renovation of the World.* And if we consider that our Saviour's coming will be in *flames of fire*, as the same Apostle *St. Paul* tells us, *2 Thess.* 1. 7, 8. 'tis plain that his coming will not be till the Conflagration: in which last flames Antichrist, will be universally destroy'd. This manner of destruction agrees also with the *Apocalypse*, and with *Daniel*, and the Prophets of the old Testament. As to the *Apocalypse*,
Babylon

Babylon, the seat of Antichrist, is represented there as destroy'd by Fire, *chap.* 18. 8, 18. *ch.* 14. 11. *ch.* 19. 3, 20. And in *Daniel*, when the Beast is destroy'd, *ch.* 7. 11. *His body was given to the burning flame.* Then as to the other Prophets, they do not, you know, speak of Antichrist or the Beast in terms: but under the Types of *Babylon*, *Tyre*, and such like; and these places or Princes are represented by them as to be destroy'd by fire, *Isa.* 13. 19. *Jer.* 51. 25. *Ezek.* 28. 18.

So much for this third Argument. The fourth Argument is this: The Future Kingdom of Christ will not be till the day of Judgment and the Resurrection. But that will not be till the end of the World. Therefore neither the kingdom of Christ. By the day of Judgment here I do not mean the final and universal Judgment: Nor by the Resurrection, the final and universal Resurrection: for these will not be till after the Millennium. But we understand here the first day of Judgment and the first Resurrection, which will be at the end of this present World; according as *S. John* does distinguish them, in the 20th *chap.* of the *Apocalypse*. Now that the Millennium will not be till the day of Judgment in this sense, we have both the testimonies of *Daniel* and of *S. John*. *Daniel* in the 7th *chap.* supposes the Beast to rule till judgment shall sit, and then they shall take away his dominion, and it shall be given to the people of the Saints of the most High. *S. John* makes an explicit declaration of both these, in his 20th *chap.* of the *Apocalypse*, which is the great Directory in this point of the Millennium; He says there were Thrones set, as for a judicature. Then there was a Resurrection from the Dead: and those that rise, reigned with Christ a Thousand years. Here's a Judicial Session, a Resurrection, and the reign of Christ joyned together. There is also another passage in *S. John*, that joyns the judgment of the Dead with the Kingdom of Christ. 'Tis in the 11th *chap.* under the seventh Trumpet. The words are these, *ver.* 15. *And the seventh Angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever.* And

ver. 9, &c.
ver. 26, &c.

ver. 4.

And the four and twenty Elders, &c. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the Dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the Prophets, and to the Saints, and them that fear thy name. Here are two things plainly express'd and link'd together, *The judging of the Dead*, and the *Kingdom of Christ*; wherein the Prophets and Saints are rewarded. Now as the *judging of the Dead* is not in this life, so neither is the reward of the Prophets and Saints in this life: as we are taught sufficiently in the Gospel and by the Apostles, (*Matt. 19. 28. 1 Thess. 1. 7. 2 Tim. 4. 8. 1 Pet. 1. 7. and ch. 5. 4.*) Therefore the Reign and Kingdom of Christ which is joyned with these two, cannot be in this life, or before the end of the world. And as a further testimony and confirmation of this, we may observe that *S. Paul to Timothy*, hath joyn'd together these three things; *The appearance of Christ, the Reign of Christ, and the judging of the Dead. I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing, and his kingdom,* 2 Tim. 4. 1.

This might also be prov'd from the order, extent, and progress, of the Prophecies of the *Apocalypse*; whereof some are such as reach to the end of the World, and yet must be accomplish'd before the Millennium begin: as the Vials. Others are so far already advanc'd towards the end of the World, as to leave no room for a thousand years reign; as the Trumpets. But because every one hath his own interpretation of these Prophecies, and it would be tedious here to prove any single Hypothesis in contradistinction to all the rest, we will therefore leave this remark, to have more or less effect, according to the minds it falls upon. And proceed to our fifth Argument.

Fifthly, The *New Jerusalem-state* is the same with the Millennial state: But the *New Jerusalem state* will not be till the end of the World, or till after the Conflagration: Therefore neither the Millennium. That the *New Jerusalem-state* is the same with the Millennium, is agreed upon, I think, by all Millenaries,
Ancient

Ancient and Modern. *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, and *Tertullian*, speak of it in that sense; and so do the later Authors, so far as I have observ'd. And *S. John* seems to give them good authority for it. In the 20th chap. of the *Apocalypse*, he says, the *Camp of the Saints* and the *Beloved City* were besieg'd by Satan and his Gigantick crew at the end of the Millennium. That *Beloved City* is the *New Jerusalem*, and you see it is the same with the *Camp of the Saints*, or, at least, contemporary with it. Besides, the marriage of the Lamb was in the *New Jerusalem*, for that was the *Spouse of the Lamb*, *Apoc.* 21. 2. Now this Spouse was ready, and this marriage was said to be come, at the destruction of *Babylon*: which was the beginning of the Millennium, *ch.* 18. 7. Therefore the *New Jerusalem* run all along with the Millennium, and was indeed the same thing under another name. Lastly, What is this *New Jerusalem* if it be not the same with the Millennial state? It is promis'd as a reward to the sufferers for Christ, *Apoc.* 3. 12. and you see its wonderful priviledges, *ch.* 21. 3, 4. and yet it is not heaven and eternal Life; for it is said to come down from God out of Heaven, *ch.* 21. 2. and *ch.* 3. 12. It can therefore be nothing but the glorious kingdom of Christ upon Earth, where the Saints shall reign with him a Thousand Years.

Now as to the second part of our Argument, that the *New Jerusalem* will not come down from Heaven till the end of the World: of this *S. John* seems to give us a plain proof or demonstration; for he places the *New Jerusalem* in the *New Heavens* and *New Earth*, which cannot be till after the Conflagration. Let us hear his words, *Apoc.* 21. 1, 2. *And I saw a New Heaven and a New Earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven: prepared as a Bride adorned for her husband.* When the *New Earth* was made, he sees the *New Jerusalem* coming down upon it; and this renovation of the Earth not being till the Conflagration. The *New Jerusalem* could not be till then, neither. The Prophet *Isaiah* had long before said the same thing, though

though not in terms so exprefs; He firſt ſays, *Behold* Isa. 65. 17, 18.
*I create new heavens and a new earth, wherein you ſhall re-
 joyce.* Then ſubjoyns immediately, *Behold, I create Jeru-
 ſalem a rejoycing.* This rejoycing is ſtill in the ſame
 place; in the New Heavens and New Earth, or in the
 New Jeruſalem. And *S. John* in a like method, firſt
 ſets down the New Earth, then the New Jeruſalem;
 and expreſſes the mind of the Prophet *Iſaiah* more di-
 ſtinctly.

This leads me to a Sixth Argument to confirm our
 Conclusion. The time of the *Reſtitution* or *Reſtauration*
of all things; ſpoken of by *S. Peter* and the Prophets,
 is the ſame with the Millennium: But that Reſtauration
 will not be till the coming of Chriſt, and the end of
 the World: Therefore neither the Millennium. That
 this Reſtitution of all things will not be till the coming
 of our Saviour, *S. Peter* declares in his Sermon, *Act. 3.*
21. and that the coming of our Saviour will not be
 till the end of the World, or till the Conflagration,
 both *S. Paul* and *S. Peter* ſignifie to us, *1 Theſſ. 1. 7, 8.*
2 Pet. 3. 10. Therefore it remains only to prove, that this
 Reſtitution of all things ſpoken of here by the Apoſtle,
 is the ſame with the Millennium. I know that which
 it does directly and immediately ſignifie, is the Reno-
 vation of the World: but it muſt include the Moral
 World as well as the Natural: otherwiſe it cannot
 be truly ſaid, as *S. Peter* does there, that all the Pro-
 phets have ſpoken of it. And what is the Renovation
 of the Natural and Moral World, but the New Je-
 ruſalem or the Millennium.

Theſe Arguments, taken together, have, to me, an
 irrefiſtible evidence for the proof of our Conclusion:
 That the Bleſſed Millennium cannot obtain in the pre-
 ſent Earth, or before the Conflagration; But when
 Nature is renew'd, and the Saints and Martyrs rais'd
 from the Dead, then they ſhall reign together with
 Chriſt, in the New Heavens and New Earth, or in
 the New Jeruſalem; Satan being bound for a thou-
 ſand years.

C H A P. IX.

The chief employment of the Millennium, DEVOTION and CONTEMPLATION.

WE have now done with the substance of our Discourse: which is comprehended in these Three Propositions:

- I. *After the Conflagration of this World, there will be New Heavens and a New Earth: And that Earth will be inhabited.*
- II. *That there is an happy Millennial state; Or a future kingdom of Christ and his Saints, prophesied of and promis'd in the Old and New Testament: and receiv'd by the Primitive Church, as a Christian and Catholick doctrine.*
- III. *That this blessed Millennial state, according as it is describ'd in Scripture, cannot take place in the present Earth, nor under the present constitution of Nature and Providence: But is to be celebrated in the New Heavens and New Earth, after the Conflagration.*

These three Propositions support this Work; and if any of them be broken, I confess my design is broken, and this Treatise is of no effect. But what remains to be spoken to in these last Chapters, is more circumstantial or modal; and an error or mistake in such things, does not wound any vital part of the argument. You must now therefore lay aside your severity, and rigorous censures; we are very happy, if, in this life, we can attain to the substance of truth: and make rational conjectures concerning modes and circumstances; where every one hath a right to offer his

his sence, with modesty and submission. Revelations made to us from Heaven in this present state, are often incompleat, and do not tell us all: as if it was on purpose to set our thoughts a work to supply the rest; which we may lawfully do, provided it be according to the analogy of Scripture and Reason.

To proceed therefore; We suppose, as you see, the *new Heavens* and the *new Earth* to be the seat of the *Millennium*: and that new Creation to be *Paradisiacal*. Its Inhabitants also to be righteous Persons, the Saints of the most High. And seeing the ordinary employments of our present life, will then be needless and superseded, as Military affairs, Sea-affairs, most Trades and Manufactures, Law, Physick, and the laborious part of Agriculture: it may be wonder'd, how this happy People, will bestow their time: what entertainment they will find in a state of so much ease, and so little action. To this one might answer in short, by another question, *How* would they have entertain'd themselves in Paradise, if man had continued in Innocency? This is a revolution of the same state, and therefore they may pass their time as well now, as they could have done then. But to answer more particularly, besides all innocent diversions, ingenuous conversations, and entertainments of friendship, the greatest part of their time will be spent in *Devotion* and *Contemplation*. O happy employment, and next to that of Heaven it self. What do the Saints above, but sing praises unto God, and contemplate his Perfections. And how mean and despicable, for the most part, are the employments of this present life, if compar'd with those intellectual actions. If Mankind was divided into ten parts, nine of those ten employ their time to get bread to their belly, and cloaths to their back; And what impertinences are these to a reasonable Soul, if she was free from the clog of a mortal Body; or if that could be provided for, without trouble or loss of time? Corporeal labour is from need and necessity, but intellectual exercises are matter of choice; that please and perfect at the same time.

Devotion warms and opens the Soul, and disposes it to receive divine influences. It sometimes raises the

Apoc. 21. 3.

mind into an heavenly ecstasie, and fills it with a joy that is not to be exprest. When it is pure, it leaves a strong impression upon the heart, of Love to God; and inspires us with a contempt of this World, having tasted the pleasures of the World to come. In the state which we speak of, seeing the *Tabernacle of God will be with men*, we may reasonably suppose that there will be greater effusions and irradiations of the Holy Spirit, than we have or can expect in this region of darkness: and consequently, all the strength and comfort that can arise from private devotion.

Psal. 84.
Psal. 87.

And as to their publick Devotions, all beauties of holiness, all perfection of divine worship, will shine in their Assemblies. Whatsoever *David* says of *Sion* and *Jerusalem*, are but shadows of this new *Jerusalem*, and of the glory that will be in those Solemnities. Imagine what a Congregation will be there of Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Christian Martyrs, and Saints of the first rank, throughout all Ages. And these all known to one another by their Names and History. This very meeting together of such Persons, must needs create a joy unspeakable: But when they unite in their praises to God and to the Lamb, with pure hearts full of divine Love: when they sing their Halleluiahs to him that sits upon the Throne, that hath wash'd them in his blood, and redeem'd them out of every Kingdom, and Tongue, and People, and Nation. When, with their Palms in their hands, they triumph over Sin, and Death, and Hell, and all the Powers of Darkness: can there be any thing, on this side Heaven, and a Quire of Angels, more glorious or more joyful?

But why did I except Angels? Why may not they be thought to be present at these Assemblies? In a Society of Saints and purified Spirits, Why should we think their converse impossible? In the Golden Age, the gods were always represented, as having freer intercourse with Men; and before the Flood, we may reasonably believe it so. I cannot think, *Enoch* was translated into Heaven without any converse with its Inhabitants before he went thither. And seeing the Angels vouchsaf'd often, in former Ages, to visit the Patriarchs upon Earth, we may with reason judge, that

that they will much more converse with the same Patriarchs and holy Prophets, now they are risen from the Dead, and cleans'd from their sins, and seated in the new *Jerusalem*. I cannot but call to mind upon this occasion, that representation which *St. Paul* makes to us, of a glorious state and a glorious Assembly, too high for this present Earth: 'Tis *Hebr.* 12. 22, &c. in these words. *But you are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels; To the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven; and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just men made perfect.* This, I know, several apply to the Times and state of the Gospel, in opposition to that of the Law; and it is introduc'd in that manner; But here are several expressions too high for any present state of things; They must respect a future state, either of Heaven, or of the Millennial kingdom of Christ. And to the later of these the expressions agree, and have a peculiar fitness and applicability to it. And what follows in the context, *ver.* 26, 27, 28. *about shaking the Heavens and the Earth once more: Removing the former Scenes, and bringing on a new Kingdom that cannot be shaken: All this, I say, answers to the kingdom of Christ, which is to be establish'd in the new Heavens and new Earth.*

But to proceed in their publick Devotions; Suppose this August Assembly, inflam'd with all divine passions, met together to celebrate the name of God; with Angels intermixt, to bear a part in this holy exercise. And let this concourse be, not in any Temple made with hands, but under the great roof of Heaven, (the true Temple of the most High,) so as all the Air may be fill'd with the chearful harmony of their Hymns and Halleluiahs. Then, in the height of their devotion, as they sing praises to the Lamb, and to him that sits upon the Throne, suppose the Heavens to open, and the Son of God to appear in his glory, *Apoc.* 5. 11. with Thousands and Ten Thousands of Angels round about him; That their eyes may see him, who, for their sakes, was crucified upon Earth, now encircled with Light and Majesty. This will raise them

ch. 5. 13.

them into as great transports as humane nature can bear: They will wish to be dissolv'd, they will strive to fly up to him in the clouds, or to breath out their Souls in repeated doxologies of *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.*

l. 5. c. 32.

But we cannot live always in the flames of Devotion. The weakness of our nature will not suffer us to continue long under such strong Passions, and such intenseness of Mind. The question is therefore, What will be the ordinary employment of that life? How will they entertain their thoughts, or spend their time? For we suppose they will not have that multiplicity of frivolous business that we have now: About our Bodies, about our Children: in Trades and Mechanics: in Traffick and Navigation: or Wars by Sea or Land. These things being swept away, wholly or in a great measure, what will come in their place? how will they find work or entertainment for a long life? If, we consider, who they are that will have a part in this first Resurrection, and be Inhabitants of that World that is to come, we may easily believe that the most constant employment of their life will be CONTEMPLATION. Not that I exclude any innocent diversions, as I said before: The entertainments of friendship, or ingenuous conversation, but the great business and design of that life is Contemplation: as preparatory to heaven and eternal Glory. *Ut paulatim assuescant capere Deum*, as Irenæus says: That they may, by degrees, enlarge their capacities, fit and accustom themselves to receive God. Or, as he says in another place, *That they may become capable of the glory of the Father*, that is, capable of bearing the glory and presence of God: capable of the highest enjoyment of him, which is usually call'd the *Beatifical Vision*; and is the condition of the blessed in Heaven.

It cannot be deny'd, that in such a Millennial state, where we shall be freed from all the incumbrances of this life, and provided of better Bodies and greater light of Mind: It cannot be doubted, I say, but that we shall then be in a disposition to make great proficiency in the knowledge of all things, Divine and Intel-

Intellectual: and consequently of making happy preparations for our entering upon a further state of glory. For there is nothing certainly does more prepare the mind of man for the highest perfections, than Contemplation: with that Devotion which naturally flows from it, as heat follows light. And this Contemplation hath always a greater or less effect upon the mind according to the perfection of its object. So as the Contemplation of the Divine Nature, is, of all others, the most perfective in it self, and to us, according to our capacities and degree of abstraction. An *Immense Being* does strangely fill the Soul: and Omnipotency, Omniscience, and Infinite Goodness, do enlarge and dilate the Spirit, while it fixtly looks upon them. They raise strong passions of Love and Admiration, which melt our Nature, and transform it into the mould and image of that which we contemplate. What the Scripture says of our *Transformation* into the Divine likeness: what *S. John* and the *Platonists* say of our *Union* with God. And whatever is not Cant in the *Mystical Theology*, when they tell us of being Deified: all this must spring from these sources of Devotion and Contemplation. They will change and raise us from perfection to perfection, as from glory to glory: into a greater similitude and nearer station to the Divine Nature.

The Contemplation of God and his Works, comprehends all things. For, the one makes the uncreated World, and the other the Created. And as the divine Essence and Attributes are the greatest object that the mind of man can set before it self; so next to that are the effects and emanations of the Divinity, or the Works of the Divine Goodness, Wisdom, and Power, in the Created World. This hath a vast extent and variety, and would be sufficient to entertain their time, in that happy state, much longer than a thousand years. As you will easily grant, if you allow me but to point at the several heads of those Speculations.

The Contemplation of the *Created World* divides it self into three parts, that of the *Intellectual World*: that of the *Corporeal*: And the Government and Admini-

ministration of both, which is usually call'd *Providence*. These three, drawn into one thought, with the reasons and proportions that result from them, compose that *GRAND IDEA*, which is the treasury and comprehension of all Knowledge. Whereof we have spoken more largely in the last Chapter of the Second Book of this Theory, under the name of the *Mundane Idea*. But at present we shall only mention such particulars, as may be thought proper subjects for the meditations and enquiries of those who shall enjoy that happy state which we now treat of.

As to the Intellectual World, excepting our own Souls, we know little, in this region of darkness where we are at present, more than bare names. We hear of Angels and Archangels, of Cherubins and Seraphins, of Principalities and Powers and Thrones and Dominions. We hear the sound of these words with admiration, but we know little of their natures; wherein their general notion, and wherein their distinction, consists: what peculiar excellencies they have, what offices and employments: of all this we are ignorant. Only in general, we cannot but suppose that there are more orders and degrees of Intellectual Beings, betwixt us and the Almighty, than there are kinds or species of living Creatures upon the face of the Earth: betwixt Man, their Lord and Master, and the least Worm that creeps upon the ground. Nay, than there are Stars in Heaven, or Sands upon the Sea shore. For there is an infinite distance and interval betwixt us and God Almighty: and all that, is fill'd with created Beings of different degrees of perfection, still approaching nearer and nearer to their Maker. And when this invisible World shall be open'd to us: when the Curtain is drawn, and the Celestial Hierarchy set in order before our eyes, we shall despise our selves, and all the petty glories of a mortal life, as the dirt under our feet.

As to the Corporeal Universe, we have some share already in the Contemplation and knowledge of that: tho' little in comparison of what will be then discover'd. The doctrine of the Heavens, fix'd Stars, Planets
and

and Comets, both as to their matter, motion and form, will be then clearly demonstrated: and what are mysteries to us now, will become matter of ordinary conversation. We shall be better acquainted with our neighbouring Worlds, and make new discoveries as to the state of their affairs. The Sun especially, the Great Monarch of the Planetary Worlds; whose dominion reaches from Pole to Pole, and the greatness of his kingdom is under the whole heaven. Who sends his bright messengers every day through all the regions of his vast Empire: throwing his beams of light round about him, swifter and further than a thought can follow. This noble Creature, I say, will make a good part of their study in the succeeding World. *Eudoxus* the Philosopher, wish'd he might die like *Phaeton*, in approaching too near to the Sun; provided he could fly so near it, and endure it so long, till he had discover'd its beauty and perfection. Who can blame his curiosity: who would not venture far to see the Court of so great a Prince: who hath more Worlds under his command than the Emperors of the Earth have Provinces or Principalities. Neither does he make his Subjects slaves to his pleasure, or tributaries to serve and supply his wants; on the contrary, They live upon him, he nourishes and preserves them: gives them fruits every year, corn, and wine, and all the comforts of life. This glorious Body, which now we can only gaze upon and admire, will be then better understood. A mass of Light and Flame, and Ethereal matter, ten thousand times bigger than this Earth: Enlightning and enlivening an Orb that exceeds the bulk of our Globe, as much as that does the least sand upon the Sea shore, may reasonably be presum'd to have some great Being at the Centre of it. But what that is, we must leave to the enquiries of another life.

The *Theory of the Earth* will be a common lesson there: carried through all its vicissitudes and periods from first to last, till its entire revolution be accomplish'd. I told you in the Preface, The *Revolution of Worlds* was one of the greatest Speculations that we are capable of in this life: and this little World where

we are, will be the first and easiest instance of it; seeing we have Records, Historical or Prophetical, that reach from the Chaos to the end of the new Heavens and new Earth: which course of time makes up the greatest part of the Circle or Revolution. And as what was before the Chaos, was but the first remove from a Fixt Star, so what is after the thousand years Renovation, is but the last step to it again.

The *Theory of humane Nature* is also an useful and necessary speculation, and will be carried on to perfection in that state. Having fixt the true distinction betwixt Matter and Spirit, betwixt the Soul and the Body, and the true nature and laws of their union: The original contract, and the terms ratified by Providence at their first conjunction: It will not be hard to discover the springs of action and passion: how the thoughts of our mind, and the motions of our body act in dependance one upon another. What are the primary differences of Genius's and complexions, and how our Intellectuals or Morals depend upon them. What is the Root of Fatality, and how far it extends. By these lights, they will see into their own and every Man's breast, and trace the foot-steps of the divine wisdom in that strange composition of Soul and Body.

This indeed is a mixt speculation, as most others are: and takes in something of both Worlds, Intellectual and Corporeal: and may also belong in part to the Third Head we mention'd, *Providence*. But there is no need of distinguishing these Heads so nicely, provided we take in, under some or other of them, what may be thought best to deserve our knowledge, now, or in another World. As to *Providence*, what we intend chiefly by it here, is the general œconomy of our Religion, and what is reveal'd to us in Scripture, concerning God, Angels, and Mankind. These Revelations, as most in Sacred Writ, are short and incomplete: as being design'd for practice more than for speculation, or to awaken and excite our thoughts, rather than to satisfy them. Accordingly we read in Scripture of a Triune Deity: of God made flesh, in the Womb of a Virgin: Barbarously crucified by the
Jews:

Chap. 9. *Concerning the New Heavens, &c.* 211

Jews: Descending into Hell: rising again from the Dead: visibly ascending into Heaven: And sitting at the right hand of God the Father, above Angels and Arch-Angels. These great things are imperfectly reveal'd to us in this life; which we are to believe so far as they are reveal'd: In hopes these mysteries will be made more intelligible, in that happy state to come, where Prophets, Apostles, and Angels, will meet in conversation together.

In like manner, how little is it we understand concerning the *Holy Ghost*. That he descended like a Dove upon our Saviour: Like cloven Tongues of fire upon the Apostles; The Place being fill'd with a rushing mighty Wind: That he over-shadowed the Blessed Virgin, and begot the Holy Infant. That He made the Apostles speak all sort of Tongues and Languages *ex tempore*, and pour'd out strange Vertues and miraculous Gifts upon the Primitive Christians. These things we know as bare matter of fact, but the method of these operations we do not at all understand: Who can tell us now, what that is which we call *INSPIRATION*? What change is wrought in the Brain, and what in the Soul: and how the effect follows? Who will give us the just definition of a *Miracle*? What the proximate Agent is above Man, and whether they are all from the same power? How the manner and process of those miraculous changes in matter, may be conceiv'd? These things we see darkly, and hope they will be set in a clearer light, and the Doctrines of our Religion more fully expounded to us, in that Future World. For as several things obscurely exprest in the Old Testament, are more clearly reveal'd in the New; So the same mysteries, in a succeeding state, may still receive a further explication.

The History of the Angels, Good or bad, makes another part of this Providential Systeme. Christian Religion gives us some notices, of both kinds, but very imperfect; What interest the Good Angels have in the government of the World, and in ordering the affairs of this Earth and Mankind: What subjection they have to our Saviour, and what part in his Mini-

stery: Whether they are Guardians to particular Persons, to Kingdoms, to Empires: All that we know at present, concerning these things, is but conjectural. And as to the bad Angels, who will give us an account of their fall, and of their former condition? I had rather know the history of *Lucifer*, than of all the *Babylonian* and *Persian* Kings; Nay, than of all the Kings of the Earth. What the Birthright was of that mighty Prince: what his Dominions: where his Imperial Court and Residence? How he was depos'd: for what Crime, and by what Power? How he still wages War against Heaven, in his exile: What Confederates he hath: What is his Power over Mankind, and how limited? What change or damage he suffer'd by the coming of Christ, and how it alter'd the posture of his affairs. Where he will be imprison'd in the *Millennium*: and what will be his last fate and final doom: whether he may ever hope for a Revolution or Restauration? These things lie hid in the secret Records of Providence, which then, I hope, will be open'd to us.

With the Revolution of *Worlds*, we mention'd before the Revolution of *Souls*; which is another great Circle of Providence, to be studied hereafter. We know little here, either of the pre-existence or post-existence of our Souls. We know not what they will be, till the loud Trump awakes us, and calls us again into the Corporeal World. Who knows how many turns he shall take upon this stage of the Earth, and how many trials he shall have, before his doom will be finally concluded. Who knows where, or what, is the state of Hell: where the Souls of the wicked are said to be to Eternity. What is the true state of Heaven: what our Celestial Bodies: and what that sovereign happiness that is call'd the *Beatifical Vision*? Our knowledge and conceptions of these things, are, at present, very general and superficial; But in the future kingdom of Christ, which is introductory to Heaven it self, these imperfections, in a great measure, will be done away; and such preparations wrought, both in the will and understanding, as may fit us for the life of Angels, and the enjoyment of God in Eternal Glory.

Thus

Thus you see in general, what will be the employment of the Saints in the blessed *Millennium*. And tho' they have few of the trifling businesses of this life, they will not want the best and noblest of diversions. 'Tis an happy thing when a Man's pleasure is also his perfection: for most Men's pleasures are such as debase their nature. We commonly gratifie our lower faculties, our passions, and our appetites: and these do not improve, but depress the mind. And besides, they are so gross, that the finest tempers are surfeited in a little time. There is no lasting pleasure, but *Contemplation*. All others grow flat and insipid upon frequent use; And when a Man hath run thorough a Sett of Vanities, in the declension of his Age, he knows not what to do with himself, if he cannot Think. He saunters about, from one dull business to another, to wear out time: And hath no reason to value life, but because he's afraid of death. But Contemplation is a continual spring of fresh pleasures. Truth is inexhausted, and when you are once in the right way, the further you go, the greater discoveries you make, and with the greater joy. We are sometimes highly pleas'd, and even transported, with little inventions in Mathematicks, or Mechanicks, or natural Philosophy; All these things will make part of their diversion and entertainment in that state; All the doctrine of sounds and harmony: Of light, colours, and perspective, will be known in perfection. But these I call Diversions, in comparison of their higher and more serious speculations, which will be the business and happiness of that life.

Do but imagine, that they will have the Scheme of all humane affairs lying before them: from the Chaos to the last period. The universal history and order of times. The whole œconomy of the Christian Religion; and of all Religions in the World. The Plan of the undertaking of the Messiah: with all other parts and ingredients of the Providence of this Earth. Do but imagine this, I say, and you will easily allow, that when they contemplate the beauty, wisdom, and goodness, of the whole design, it must needs raise great and noble passions, and a far richer joy than either
the

the pleasures or speculations of this life can excite in us. And this being the last Act and close of all humane affairs, it ought to be the more exquisite and elaborate: that it may crown the work, satisfy the Spectators, and end in a general applause. The whole Theater resounding with the praises of the great Dramatist, and the wonderful art and order of the composition.

CHAP. X.

Objections against the Millennium, answer'd. With some Conjectures concerning the state of things after the Millennium: and what will be the final Consummation of this World.

YOU see how Nature and Providence have conspir'd, to make the *Millennium* as happy a state, as any Terrestrial state can be. For, besides health and Plenty: Peace, Truth, and Righteousness will flourish there, and all the evils of this life stand excluded. There will be no ambitious Princes, studying mischief one against another; or contriving methods to bring their own Subjects into slavery. No mercenary Statesmen, to assist and intrigue with them. No oppression from the powerful, no snares or traps laid for the innocent. No treacherous friends, no malicious Enemies. No knaves, cheats, hypocrites; the Vermin of this Earth, that swarm every where. There will be nothing but truth, candor, sincerity, and ingenuity: as in a Society or Commonwealth of Saints and Philosophers. In a word, 'twill be *Paradise Restor'd*: both as to innocency of temper, and the beauties of Nature.

I believe you will be apt to say, If this be not true, 'tis pity but that it should be true. For 'tis a very desirable state, where all good People would find themselves

selves mightily at ease. What is it that hinders it then? It must be some ill *Genius*. For Nature tends to such a Renovation, as we suppose: and Scripture speaks loudly of an happy state to be, some time or other, on this side Heaven. And what is there, pray, in this present World, natural or moral, if I may ask with reverence, that could make it worth the while for God to create it, if it never was better, nor ever will be better? Is there not more misery than happiness: Is there not more vice than virtue, in this World? as if it had been made by a *Manichean* God. The Earth barren, the Heavens inconstant: Men wicked, and God offended. This is the posture of our affairs: such hath our World been hitherto: with wars and bloodshed, sickness and diseases, poverty, servitude and perpetual drudgery for the necessities of a mortal life. We may therefore reasonably hope, from a God infinitely good and powerful, for better times and a better state, before the last period and consummation of all things.

But it will be objected, it may be, that, according to Scripture, the vices and wickedness of men will continue to the end of the World; and so there will be no room for such an happy state, as we hope for. Our Saviour says, *When the son of man cometh, shall he find faith upon the Earth?* They shall eat and drink and play, as before the destruction of the old World, or of Sodom, (*Luk. 17. 26, &c.*) and the wickedness of those men, you know, continued to the last. This objection may pinch those that suppose the Millennium to be in the present Earth, and a thousand years before the coming of our Saviour: for his words seem to imply that the World will be in a state of wickedness even till his coming. Accordingly Antichrist or the *Man of Sin*, is not said to be destroy'd till the coming of our Saviour. *2 Thess. 2. 8.* and till he be destroy'd, we cannot hope for a Millennium. Lastly, the Coming of our Saviour is always represented in Scripture as sudden, surprising and unexpected. As *Lightning* breaking suddenly out of the clouds, (*Luk. 17. 24. and ch. 21. 34, 35.*) or as a *thief in the night*, *1 Thess. 5. 2, 3, 4. 2 Pet. 3. 10. Apoc. 16. 15.* But if there

there be such a forerunner of it as the Millennial state, whose bounds we know, according as that expires and draws to an end, men will be certainly advertis'd of the approaching of our Saviour. But this objection, as I told you, does not affect our hypothesis, for we suppose the Millennium will not be till after the coming of our Saviour, and the Conflagration. And also that his coming will be sudden and surprising: and that Antichrist will continue in being, tho' not in the same degree of power, till that time. So that they that place the Millennium in the present Earth, are chiefly concern'd to answer this first objection.

But you will object, it may be, in the second place, That this Millennium, wheresoever it is, would degenerate, at length, into sensuality, and a Mahometan Paradise. For where there are earthly pleasures and earthly appetites, they will not be kept always in order, without any excess or luxuriancy: especially as to the senses of touch and taste. I am apt to think this is true, if the Soul have no more power over the body than she hath at present: and our senses, passions, and appetites be as strong as they are now. But according to our explication of the Millennium, we have great reason to hope, that the Soul will have a greater dominion over the Resurrection-body, than she hath over this. And you know we suppose that none will truly inherit the Millennium, but those that rise from the Dead. Nor do we admit any propagation there, nor the trouble or weakness of Infants. But that all rise in a perfect age, and never die: being translated, at the final judgment, to meet our Saviour in the clouds, and to be with him for ever. Thus we easily avoid the force of this objection. But those that place the Millennium in this life, and to be enjoy'd in these Bodies, must find out some new preservatives against vice: otherwise they will be continually subject to degeneracy.

Another objection may be taken from the personal Reign of Christ upon Earth: which is a thing incongruous, and yet asserted by many modern Millenaries. That Christ should leave that right hand of his

his Father, to come and pass a thousand years here below: living upon Earth in an heavenly Body: This, I confess, is a thing I never could digest, and therefore I am not concern'd in this objection; not thinking it necessary that Christ should be personally present and resident upon Earth in the Millennium. I am apt to believe that there will be then a celestial presence of Christ, if I may so call it; as the Sun is present to the Earth, yet never leaves its place in the Firmament; so Christ may be visibly conspicuous in his heavenly Throne, as he was to S. Steven: and yet never leave the right hand of his Father. And this would be a more glorious and illustrious presence, than if he should descend, and converse amongst men in a personal shape. But these things not being distinctly reveal'd to us, we ought not to determine any thing concerning them, but with modesty and submission.

Act. 7.
55, 56.

We have thus far pretty well escap'd, and kept our selves out of the reach of the ordinary objections against the Millennium. But there remains one, concerning a *double Resurrection*, which must fall upon every Hypothesis: and 'tis this. The Scripture, they say, speaks but of one Resurrection: whereas the doctrine of the Millennium supposes two; one at the beginning of the Millennium, for the Martyrs, and those that enjoy that happy state, and the other at the end of it; which is universal and final, in the last day of judgment. 'Tis true, Scripture generally speaks of the Resurrection in gross: without distinguishing first and second; and so it speaks of the *Coming* of our Saviour, without distinction of first or second; yet it does not follow from that, that there is but one coming of our Saviour: so neither that there is but one Resurrection. And seeing there is one place of Scripture that speaks expressly and distinctly of two Resurrections, namely the 20th chap. of the *Apocalypse*: that is to us a sufficient warrant for asserting two. As there are some things in one Evangelist that are not in another, yet we think them authentick if they be but in one. There are also some things in *Daniel*, concerning the *Messiah*, and concerning the *Resurrection*, that are not in the rest of the Prophets: yet we look upon

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his single testimony, as good authority. S. *John* writ the last of all the Apostles: and as the whole series of his Prophecies is new, reaching through the later times to the Consummation of all things; so we cannot wonder if he had something more particular reveal'd to him concerning the Resurrection; that which was spoken of before in general, being distinguish'd now into *First* and *Second*, or particular and universal, in this last Prophet. Some think S. *Paul* means no less, when he makes an order in the Resurrection: some rising sooner, some later: 1 *Cor.* 15. 23, 24. 1 *Thess.* 4. 14, 15, &c. but whether that be so or no, S. *John* might have a more distinct revelation concerning it, than S. *Paul* had, or any one before him.

After these Objections, a great many Quæries and difficulties might be propos'd relating to the Millennium. But that's no more than what is found in all other matters, remote from our knowledge. Who can answer all the Quæries that may be made concerning *Heaven*, or *Hell*, or *Paradise*? When we know a thing as to the substance, we are not to let go our hold, tho' there remain some difficulties unresolv'd; otherwise we should be eternally Sceptical in most matters of knowledge. Therefore, tho' we cannot, for example, give a full account of the distinction of habitations and inhabitants in the *Future Earth*: or, of the order of the *first Resurrection*; whether it be performed by degrees and successively, or all the Inhabitants of the New Jerusalem rise at once, and continue throughout the whole Millennium. I say, tho' we cannot give a distinct account of these, or such like particulars, we ought not therefore to deny or doubt whether there will be a *New Earth*, or a *First Resurrection*. For the Revelation goes clearly so far: and the obscurity is only in the consequences and dependances of it. Which Providence thought fit, without further light, to leave to our search and disquisition.

Scripture mentions one thing, at the end of the Millennium, which is a common difficulty to all; and every one must contribute their best thoughts and conjectures towards the solution of it. 'Tis the strange doctrine

doctrine of *Gog* and *Magog*; which are to rise up in rebellion against the Saints, and besiege the holy City, and the holy Camp. And this is to be upon the expiration of the thousand years, when Satan is loosen'd. For no sooner will his Chains be knock'd off, but he will put himself in the head of this Army of Gyants, or Sons of the Earth, and attack Heaven, and the Saints of the most High. But with ill success, for there will come down fire and lightning from Heaven, and consume them. This, methinks, hath a great affinity with the history of the Gyants, rebelling and assaulting Heaven, and struck down by thunder-bolts. But that of setting mountains upon mountains, or tossing them into the Skie, that's the Poetical part, and we must not expect to find it in the Prophecy. The Poets told their fable, as of a thing past, and so it was a fable; But the Prophets speak of it, as of a thing to come, and so it will be a reality. But how and in what sence it is to be understood and explain'd, every one has the liberty to make the best judgment he can.

Ezekiel mentions *Gog* and *Magog*: which I take to be onely types and shadows of these which we are now speaking of: and not yet exemplified, no more than his Temple. And seeing this People is to be at the end of the *Millennium*, and in the same Earth with it, We must, according to our Hypothesis, plant them in the Future Earth; and therefore all former conjectures about the *Turks*, or *Scythians*, or other *Barbarians*, are out of doors with us, seeing the Scene of this action does not lie in the present Earth. They are also represented by the Prophet, as a People distinct and separate from the Saints, not in their manners onely, but also in their seats and habitations; For they are said to come up from the four corners of the Earth, upon the breadth of the Earth: and there to besiege the *Camp of the Saints and the beloved City*: This makes it seem probable to me, that there will be a double race of Mankind in that *Future Earth*: very different one from another, both as to their temper and disposition, and as to their origine. The one born from Heaven, Sons of God, and of the Resurrection: who are the true Saints and heirs of the *Millennium*. The

others born of the Earth, Sons of the Earth, generated from the slime of the ground, and the heat of the Sun, as brute Creatures were at first. This second Progeny or Generation of Men in the Future Earth, I understand to be signified by the Prophet under these borrowed or feigned names of *Gog* and *Magog*. And this Earth-born race, encreasing and multiplying after the manner of Men, by carnal propagation, after a thousand years, grew numerous, as the Sand by the Sea; and thereupon made an irruption or inundation upon the face of the Earth, and upon the habitations of the Saints; As the barbarous Nations did formerly upon Christendom: Or as the Gyants are said to have made War against the Gods. But they were soon confounded in their impious and sacrilegious design, being struck and consum'd by fire from Heaven.

Some will think, it may be, that there was such a double race of Mankind in the first World also. *The Sons of Adam, and the Sons of God*: because it is said, Gen. 6. *When men began to multiply upon the face of the Earth, that the SONS OF GOD SAW THE DAUGHTERS OF MEN, that they were fair, and they took them Wives of all that they lik'd.* And it is added presently, ver. 4. *There were Gyants in the Earth in those days; and also after that, when the Sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same became mighty men, which were of old men of renown.* Here seem to be two or three orders or races in this Ante-diluvian World. *The Sons of God: The Sons and Daughters of Adam*: and a third sort arising from the mixture and copulation of these, which are call'd *Mighty men of old*, or Hero's. Besides, here are Gyants mention'd, and to which they are to be reduc'd, it does not certainly appear.

This mixture of these two Races, whatsoever they were, gave, it seems, so great offence to God, that he destroy'd that World upon it, in a Deluge of Water. It hath been matter of great difficulty to determine, who these *Sons of God* were, that fell in love with and married the daughters of men. There are two conjectures that prevail most: One, that they were Angels: and another, that they were of the Posterity of
Seth,

Seth, and distinguish'd from the rest, by their Piety, and the worship of the true God: so that it was a great crime for them to mingle with the rest of mankind, who are suppos'd to have been Idolaters. Neither of these opinions is to me satisfactory. For as to Angels; Good Angels neither *marry*, nor *are given in marriage*; *Matt. 22. 30.* and bad Angels are not call'd the *Sons of God*. Besides, if Angels were capable of those mean pleasures, we ought in reason to suppose, that there are female Angels, as well as male; for surely those capacities are not in vain through a whole *Species* of Beings. And if there be female Angels, we cannot imagine, but that they must be of a far more charming beauty than the dowdy daughters of men. Then as to the line of *Seth*, It does not appear that there was any such distinction of Idolaters and true Worshippers before the Flood, or that there was any such thing, as Idolatry, at that time: nor for some Ages after. Besides, it is not said that the Sons of God fell in love with the Daughters of *Cain*, or of any degenerate race, but with the Daughters of *Adam*: which may be the Daughters of *Seth*, as well as of any other. These conjectures therefore seem to be shallow and ill grounded. But what the distinction was of those two orders, remains yet very uncertain.

St. Paul to the *Galatians*, (*chap. 4. 21, 22, &c.*) makes a distinction also of a double Progeny: that of *Sarah*, and that of *Hagar*. One was born according to the flesh; after a natural manner: and the other by the divine power, or in vertue of the divine promise. This distinction of a natural and supernatural origine, and of a double progeny: the one born to servitude, the other to liberty: represents very well either the manner of our present birth, and of our future, at the Resurrection: Or that double progeny and double manner of birth, which we suppose in the *Future Earth*. 'Tis true, *St. Paul* applies this to the Law and the Gospel; but Typical things, you know, have different aspects and completions: which are not exclusive of one another: and so it may be here. But however this double race of Mankind in the *Future Earth*, to explain the doctrine of *Gog* and *Magog*, is
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but a conjecture: and does not pretend to be otherwise consider'd.

The last thing that remains to be consider'd and accounted for, is the upshot and conclusion of all: namely, what will become of the Earth after the thousand years expir'd? Or after the Day of Judgment past, and the Saints translated into Heaven, what will be the face of things here below? There being nothing expressly reveal'd concerning this, we must not expect a positive resolution of it. And the difficulty is not peculiar to our hypothesis: for though the *Millennium*, and the final Judgment were concluded in the present Earth, the Quære would still remain, *What* would become of this Earth after the Last Day. So that all parties are equally concern'd, and equally free, to give their opinion, *What* will be the *last state and Consummation* of this Earth. Scripture, I told you, hath not defin'd this point: and the Philosophers say very little concerning it. The Stoicks indeed speak of the final resolution of all things into *Fire*, or into *Æther*: which is the purest and subtlest sort of fire. So that the whole Globe or Mass of the Earth, and all particular bodies, will, according to them, be at last dissolv'd into a liquid flame. Neither was this doctrine first invented by the Stoicks: *Heraclitus* taught it long before them: and I take it to be as ancient as *Orpheus* himself: who was the first Philosopher amongst the *Greeks*. And he deriving his notions from the *Barbarick* Philosophers, or the Sages of the East, that School of wisdom may be look'd upon as the true seminary of this doctrine: as it was of most other natural knowledge.

But this dissolution of the Earth into Fire, may be understood two ways; either that it will be dissolv'd into a loose flame, and so dissipated and lost as Lightning in the Air, and vanish into nothing; or that it will be dissolv'd into a fixt flame, such as the Sun is, or a fixt Star. And I am of opinion, that the Earth after the last Day of Judgment, will be chang'd into the nature of a Sun, or of a fixt Star: and shine like them in the Firmament. Being all melted down into a mass of *Æthereal* matter, and enlightning a Sphere

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or Orb round about it. I have no direct and demonstrative proof of this, I confess; But if Planets were once fixt Stars, as I believe they were; their revolution to the same state again, in a great circle of Time, seems to be according to the methods of Providence; which loves to recover what was lost or decay'd, after certain periods: and what was originally good and happy, to make it so again; All Nature, at last, being transform'd into a like glory with the Sons of God. Rom. 8. 21.

I will not tell you what foundation there is in Nature, for this change or transformation; from the interiour constitution of the Earth, and the instances we have seen of new Stars appearing in the Heavens. I should lead the English Reader too far out of his way, to discourse of these things. But if there be any passages or expressions in Scripture, that countenance such a state of things after the day of judgment, it will not be improper to take notice of them. That radiant and illustrious *Jerusalem*, describ'd by *S. John Apoc. 21. ver. 10, 11, 12, &c.* compos'd all of Gemms and bright materials, clear and sparkling, as a Star in the Firmament: Who can give an account what that is? Its foundations, walls, gates, streets, all the Body of it, resplendent as light or fire. What is there in Nature, or in this Universe, that bears any resemblance with such a Phenomenon as this, unless it be a Sun or a fixt Star? Especially if we add and consider what follows, That *the City had no need of the Sun, nor of the Moon, to shine in it.* ver. 23. And that *there was no night there.* ver. 25. This can be no Terrestrial Body; it must be a substance luminous in it self, and a fountain of light, as a fixt Star. And upon such a change of the Earth, or transformation, as this, would be brought to pass the saying that is written, *DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.* Which indeed *S. Paul* seems to apply to our Bodies in particular, *1 Cor. 15. 54.* But in the Eighth Chap. to the *Romans* He extends it to all Nature. *The Creation it self also shall* ver. 21. *be deliver'd from the bondage of Corruption, into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God.* And accordingly *S. John*, speaking of the same time with *S. Paul* in that place to the

Apoc. 20. 14. the *Corinthians*, namely of the general Resurrection and day of Judgment, says, *Death and Hades, which we render Hell, were cast into the lake of fire.* This is their being *swallowed up in victory*, which *S. Paul* speaks of; when *Death and Hades*, that is, all the Region of mortality: The Earth and all its dependances: are ob-
 sorpt into a mass of Fire; and converted, by a glorious Victory over the powers of darkness, into a Luminous Body and a region of Light.

This great Issue and Period of the Earth, and of all humane affairs, tho' it seem to be founded in nature, and supported by several expressions of Scripture; yet we cannot, for want of full instruction, propose it otherwise than as a fair Conjecture. The Heavens and the Earth shall flie away at the day of Judgment, says the Text: *Apoc. 20. 11. And their place shall not be found.* This must be understood of our Heavens and our Earth. And their *flying away* must be their removing to some other part of the Universe; so as their place or residence shall not be found any more here below. This is the easie and natural sence of the Words; and this translation of the Earth will not be without some change preceding, that makes it leave its place, and, with a lofty flight, take its seat amongst the Stars.----- There we leave it; Having conducted, it for the space of Seven Thousand Years, through various changes, from a *dark Chaos to a bright Star.*

F I N I S.

